



Delight as Phase Trust charity awarded £350,000

LOTTERY JOY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

By Jamie Brassington

A HALESOWEN-based charity which supports young people in their social and emotional development has been awarded nearly £350,000 from the Big Lottery Fund.

Phase Trust was awarded the cash from the branch of the National Lottery so it can continue supporting young people.

It has operated since 1999 and supports youngsters facing challenges to their social, emotional and behavioural development – factors, which the project says, often have an adverse effect on their education and futures.

Part of the funding will enable Phase Trust to take on an additional member of staff. Jayne Sargeant, Phase Trust manager, said: "We are delighted to have been awarded this funding and want to take this opportunity to thank the Big Lottery Fund for their continued support."

"This will enable the work we are doing, not only to continue, but widen our reach geographically and expand to include a lower age range."

Challenging

"We have seen an increase in the number of enquiries asking for help with children and young people struggling with challenging issues, and we are so pleased that we now have the funding in place to start to respond to that need."

The money granted from the Big Lottery Fund totalled £334,236.

Phase Trust was set up by a group of local church and community leaders who have worked with young people in and around Halesowen since 1999.

The charity has been actively involved in supporting young people inside and outside schools to allow them to take part in different engaging activities.

It was founded in response to the needs of young people at the time and the charity still has young people at its core.

Phase Trust is located in Owen House located on Little Cornbow, Halesowen.

It has a range of different facilities at the centre, including a sports hall, dance studio and classroom.

It's main room, called The Hub, features pool tables, sofas and a PlayStation4 and acts as a gateway to the rest of its facilities in the building. There is also room for live music within its basement space.

For more about Phase Trust, visit www.phase-trust.org.uk or call 0121 585 9419.

JORDANNE SETS THE STANDARDS YET AGAIN



Jordanne Whiley flies the flag for the Black Country as she retains her British Open title in Nottingham

HALESOWEN'S Jordanne Whiley was flying the Black Country flag with pride after winning back-to-back singles titles at the British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships.

Whiley tweeted the picture on Sunday after beating Dutchwoman Aniek van Koot in Nottingham.

After the game she sent messages of support to her family and friends along with tweeting Dudley Council a picture of her holding her trophy posed in front of the Black Country flag and Union Jack.

She tweeted: "After a great week of tennis

and smiles all round it's time to go home. Thanks everyone for the support. And a special thanks to my family for coming out to support – @dudleymbc flying the flag for you after winning the British open singles title."

Earlier in the week Whiley and fellow Brit Lucy Shuker, the London 2012 bronze medalists, had the toughest of first round draws in the women's doubles and eventually bowed out to top seeds Griffioen and van Koot.

Speaking before the big game on Sunday, Whiley said: "I'm so chuffed to be into the final." Last month, Whiley was selected to

represent Great Britain at the Paralympics along with nine other wheelchair tennis players. At London 2012, she won her first Paralympic medal as she claimed bronze in the women's doubles alongside Lucy Shuker.

She added: "I'm delighted to be selected for Rio. This will be my third Paralympic Games and this is the one where I will be looking to bring home two gold medals. I've been working so hard for the last four years for this moment, so I fully intend to grab it with two hands."

● Titles – back page

RED TAPE

Parades backed by commissioner

WEST Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson has said he will 'not let bureaucracy get in the way' of Remembrance Sunday parades.

A change in police policy means closing roads for the parades to honour fallen soldiers is now the responsibility of organisers – who face costly bills for professional traffic management contractors.

But Mr Jamieson has said he will do whatever he can to make sure that the parades will go ahead.

● Jeopardy – Page 3

FINANCE

Council tax could rise for worse-off

LOW-INCOME households in Dudley could be facing a five per cent rise on their council tax bills.

Dudley Council is proposing to make changes to its council tax reduction scheme. Currently, all working age Dudley households eligible for the reduction have to pay at least 20 per cent of the council tax of their property.

Bosses are proposing to increase that to 22 or 25 per cent, but could keep the scheme as it is. Have a say at www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/your-council

EMERGENCY

4x4 car crashes into petrol station

ONE man was taken to hospital after a 4x4 crashed into the front of a petrol station in Halesowen.

The incident happened just after 11am on Tuesday at the Esso service station on Bromsgrove Road opposite McDonalds.

One man in his 20s who was in the shop at the time was taken to Russells Hall Hospital to be checked over.

Firefighters from Haden Cross attended. Crew commander Brett Mortimer from Haden Cross Fire Station said the driver was unsure what had happened but it appeared there was a problem with the brakes.

INSIDE:

SOCCER LEGEND FILM AMBITION



PAGE 4

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2 CONTENTS	
PETER RHODES	4
MARK ANDREWS	6
LETTERS	7
MEMORY LANE	16
FAST TICKET	23
PROPERTY	31
MOTORING	37
SPORT	39-40
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READERS of the Chronicle series can enjoy a new travel service, which offers day and weekend trips plus a variety of holidays with trusted tour operators.

Star Reader Travel has been part of the weeklies' sister newspaper the Express & Star for more than 40 years, working with specialist companies offering passengers quality trips at affordable prices.

Now Chronicle readers can take advantage of these breaks and holidays which will be advertised in the paper every week. They simply contact the tour operator direct to request a brochure and book their chosen trip. All trips are provided by trusted agents and are handpicked so readers have peace of mind they are getting the best value for money. Offers include

weekend breaks to London, river cruises and trips to Europe by air, coach or Eurostar. There are also long haul packages to far away destinations, frequently escorted by experienced tour managers, as well as once-in-a-lifetime experience trips.

Group Editor Sue Attwater said: "This is a great new service for our readers. We hand pick the tour companies to ensure our readers are being given the best customer care possible.

"Our readers know they will be in safe hands as all our operators are bonded and have ATOL protection, where applicable, to meet the high standards expected by us.

"Have a look at what is on offer in today's paper from Star Reader Travel."

Bosses wary over Metro line extension project

TRANSPORT bosses have said caution should be reserved on a proposed extension of the Midland Metro line from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill until funding for the project is secured.

The extension to the line to take the Metro into Dudley has long been mooted but experts say any work is still a long way off.

A business case is currently being prepared on the scheme, on which a final decision is also likely to be on hold until the new combined authority is up and running.

Council bosses in Sandwell also warned the recent changes at the top of the Government could also have an impact.

Regeneration boss Councillor Paul Moore said: "I think it is right to reserve some caution at the moment.

"If the scheme is ever going to happen now is the time to do it, but (Chancellor) Phillip Hammond, the Treasury team and and Theresa May have got to honour the commitment they made."

Promise

Council leader Steve Eling said: "We are pressing for this to happen. There is a commitment from us. This has been hanging around for 20 years and there has been no progress whatsoever.

"It seems to be nearing a reality with the promise of cash from the combined authority but if they promise us money it's not in the bank yet.

"Where we are at the moment is the plans are being drawn up but there is a substantial amount of work to be done before we see any physical work."

It is hoped the Metro line will be extended from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill over the next decade. Despite the concerns over the scheme, it has been given encouragement with the backing of plans to extend the line in Wolverhampton.

Permission has been granted by the Government to begin work on the £18 million city centre extension, with completion also scheduled for 2019. The route will take trams along Pipers Row, stopping outside the bus station before continuing to the railway station which will also be redeveloped in the Wolverhampton Interchange Project.

Castle horror screening just the ticket



Tickets are selling fast for the open air cinema event at Dudley Castle. Credit: Greg Milner

MORE than 100 people are expected to visit Dudley Castle this weekend when it is transformed into an open air cinema.

Horror film The Bride of Frankenstein, starring Boris Karloff, will be screened on Saturday night as part of Dudley Castle After Dark, with tickets selling fast.

The 1935 classic was directed by Dudley-born James Whale.

The event is being run in partnership with Flatpack Projects and will include a series of spooky sur-

prises. Visitors can take along their own chair and blanket. It is part of Flatpack's Black Country Pop-up Film Tour, running in conjunction with Creative Black Country's Imagine That! summer season.

Abbe Elliston, operations manager for Flatpack Projects, said: "Tickets are selling really well. We will be expecting that there will be in excess of 100 people."

Gates open at 8pm but the main film will be screened at 9.30 following a mixture of warm-up show-

ings. It is rated PG and tickets are available for £10, with concessions £8.

There will also be a DJ, food and bar. For more information go to www.flatpackfestival.org.uk

James Whale worked as a cobbler and panel beater in Dudley before joining the Army in the First World War. When he returned to the UK he gained a reputation in classic horror films such as Frankenstein, followed by The Invisible Man and Bride of Frankenstein.

Thug is jailed for attacking stranger in town centre

A THUG has been locked up for a year after attacking a stranger in Dudley town centre packed with shoppers.

Gavin Johnson – who was with two 17-year-old youths – demanded money after confronting the victim near the junction of Stone and Tower Streets, shortly after the young man got off a bus.

The 25-year-old defendant later claimed: "He got a bit anxious towards me and then spat in my face. The natural reaction to that is to hit him and that is what I did."

An elderly woman shopper was sent flying as Johnson frogmarched the other man round a corner where he was knocked to the ground, punched and kicked but not seriously injured, said Mr Andrew Wallace, prosecuting at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

The two youths became involved as the victim had two mobile phones taken from his pockets during the fracas on September 11. A CCTV operator alerted police and the trio were detained close to the scene. A fourth culprit escaped and has not been traced.

Johnson from Central Drive, Lower Gornal admitted assault and was sent to prison for 12 months by Judge John Wait who said: "This was carried out in broad daylight, in the centre of a town in front of shoppers without regard for those around you."

The two teenagers, who both admitted robbery, were remanded on bail and will be sentenced at the youth court at a later date.

Woman up on roof for 17 hours

A WOMAN came down from the roof of a car park in Halesowen following an incident which lasted around 17 hours.

Pool Road was shut off at both ends from around 8am last Thursday while officers work to resolve the incident.

Access was blocked at both Queens Way and Birmingham Street at the ends of the road which is close to Halesowen Leisure Centre. She came down at around 1.30am on Friday.

West Midlands Police spokesman Lee Page said the woman was detained under the Mental Health Act.

The force thanked people for their patience after some were unable to retrieve their vehicles from the car park.

He added: "Their patience allowed for this to be resolved safely and the officers at the scene are grateful for that."

Adult panto set to be a Whitty affair

AN adult pantomime is coming to Brierley Hill Civic Hall in the new year.

The Market Theatre Company is to give performances of Dick Whitty for an over-16s audience on January 25 and 26 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £15 from 01384 573381.

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Pledge over returning church to past glory

A LANDMARK Dudley church closed for the last 14 years will reopen this month as campaigners finally secured the lease promising to return it to its former glory.

The St John's Preservation Group will become tenants of the historic Kates Hill church and can now start the task of restoring the building.

They say it will be used for six Anglican services a year, with plans of creating a visitor centre, cafe, gift shop and costumed guided tours.

The 2.5 acres of graveyard has also been developed to double as a nature reserve, with additional land at the side to be extended to create trails, pools and a community orchard.

Group chairman Deb Brownlee said: "Our task now is not just to make the building physically usable but also make it so well used and loved that it will never fall into danger again."

The lease was completed on July 27 - exactly 176 years to the day when the church was opened in 1840.

The public are invited to the church for a ceremonial key handover by the Archdeacon of Dudley at 3pm on August 17. The group aims to allow immediate public access and intends to let supporters see the church in its raw state by creating a walk through.

The group had difficulty in obtaining insurance for the building, and the final cost for cover was £9,500. They are currently asking for donations to help build their funds up again. Call 07871195042 or email savestjohnschurch@hotmail.co.uk

£1.4m council homes complete

A £1.4 million pound revamp of a former care home to create 14 new council homes is complete.

Work to convert and refurbish the former Arcal Lodge care home in Sedgley began last summer.

The development is made up of eight bungalows, three two-bed and three one-bed flats.

The completed scheme has been handed over to the council and residents are set to move in to the newly renamed Arcal Lodge Mews.

The scheme has been funded through a £245,000 grant from the government's Homes and Communities Agency, with the remaining funds coming from the council's Housing Revenue Account and Right to Buy receipts.

Support group stages fun day

A SUPPORT group is holding a community fun day in Dudley this month.

The event at Summit House Support's base at Brindley House, North Street, is being held on August 19 from 11am to 4pm.

Robot team powers into TV final



Team Carbide with their robot

A DUDLEY team wowed the crowds as a cult show returned to the small screen for the first time in more than a decade.

Robot Wars is back on TV on a Sunday night. The opening show in the series was the first in 12 years.

Teams design fighting robots weighing more than 100kg who battle it out for supremacy in a purpose-built arena.

Team Carbide - complete with a vicious blade that spins at up to 2,300rpm - was put together by David Moulds, a robotics engineer for

Cadburys, Sam Smith, an aerospace engineer for Rolls Royce, and former Dudley College student Sheryl Prior.

After a stuttering start, the trio's robot wreaked havoc, decimating opponents and sending fragments of their foes flying into the air.

Stronger

The trio progressed through to the grand final which will air later this year. Team Carbide posted on Twitter afterwards: "Hope you guys liked the show as much as we did! Thanks #RobotWars see you in the final!"

Fans certainly showed their support for the returning show, with Robot Wars powering to a stronger performance in the ratings than the last episode of Top Gear.

The rebooted series was broadcast in the 8pm Sunday slot vacated by the motoring show.

An average of two million viewers watched Robot Wars, which was a fixture on the BBC from 1998 to 2003.

Presented by comedian Dara O'Brian and Angela Scanlon, Robot Wars achieved a 10 per cent share of the available viewing audience.

Police decision puts parades in jeopardy

DUDLEY'S Remembrance Day parade is at risk after West Midlands Police admitted it would no longer provide officers for traffic management duties.

The force's move has been labelled 'a disgrace' and 'disgusting' by Royal British Legion leaders across the Black Country.

A top officer has confirmed a change of policy, which means closing roads for the parades to honour fallen soldiers is now the responsibility of organisers.

However, some Black Country British Legion branches have claimed they will not be able afford the cash required to hire a professional traffic management contractor. This could put some events at risk - including Dudley's.

A letter to Walsall North MP David Winnick, from Walsall Chief Superintendent Joanne Clews states that at a meeting last month, between police and Walsall branches, members were told that police 'would not as in previous years be able to resource the physical staffing of the road closures'.

Malcolm Davis, chairman of the Dudley branch of the Royal British Legion, said it was 'an absolute disgrace' that branches may have to fund their own traffic management schemes if nothing is done. He said: "We have to host these parades, this is our way of commemorating those who gave their today for our tomorrow."

Disgrace

"I highly doubt we would be able to go ahead with our parade if we had to pay for our own traffic enforcement. If we can't go ahead with it, it would be an absolute disgrace, I hope somebody can step in to help."

Cradley chairman Norman Catton said the town's parade would carry on regardless, but he was outraged at the police's decision.

Halesowen British Legion's welfare officer Ray Clift said he, too, was disappointed by the police's decision, but said the town's parade would go ahead as usual thanks to the support from volunteers.

Mr Clift said: "I'm angry about this and I think the police have got their priorities wrong."

West Midlands Police spokesman Joanne Hunt said the force was 'absolutely committed' to supporting parades and would be sending volunteers to attend, but closing roads was the responsibility of event organisers.



Residents, staff and stakeholders holding a cake to mark the first anniversary of Saltbrook Place in Lye

Scheme marks its first birthday

AN award-winning supported housing scheme for vulnerable adults and the homeless in Dudley has celebrated its first anniversary.

Owned and managed by housing and care provider Midland Heart, Saltbrook Place in Lye plays a key role in preventing rough sleeping. The scheme is a partnership between Midland Heart, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and the Homes and Communities Agency and since opening has been at full occupancy, supporting 158 residents.

To mark its birthday customers and partners enjoyed a celebration event complete with birthday cake.

As well as structured support and accommodation, customers have access to an IT suite, training kitchens and allotments, as well as mainstream health services, specialist agencies and local colleges. The building houses extensive facilities for the wider neighbourhood, including meeting rooms and catering and exercise facilities.

For more, visit <http://www.midlandheart.org.uk/supporting-you/homeless/flagship-accommodation/>

NEWS IN BRIEF

New year start on road scheme

WORK on a £5m major road improvement scheme for Pensnett will begin in January, it has been announced.

The scheme, for Pensnett High Street, was launched by Dudley Council in September. It aims to reduce congestion, improve the safety of roads and pedestrian crossings and increase the reliability of bus services.

The scheme will see the road widened into two lanes in both directions and new traffic lights be installed around the site. Some businesses and residents will be relocated to make way for the revamped High Street.

Trio of students build for future

STUDENTS are building their own futures on Stourbridge College's latest construction project.

Three carpentry apprentices, Mohammed Miah, 23, Kiran Noor, 19 and Ben Hubbins, 20, have been employed to help deliver the college's ambition of high quality training facilities for electrical, plumbing and carpentry trades.

All three are using the opportunity on site to further their training by working as apprentices alongside sub-contractor Bradley Cooper Carpentry and Joinery Ltd.

150 dwellings in new development

PLANS have been submitted for 150 homes near Stourbridge.

The plans which have been lodged with Dudley Council, show the new estate would be built either side of the River Stour in Wollaston.

The homes would be built on land close to where Wollaston Road meets High Street.

More detailed plans are expected to be sent to planners over the coming weeks. Members of the planning committee will then make a decision.

Change of venue for councillor's surgery

WORDSLEY ward councillor Paul Brothwood is to move his monthly surgery from Wordsley Library to the community centre.

Each surgery will take place on the last Thursday of every month from 5.30-7pm.

Councillor Brothwood said: "If these times are not convenient I'm more than happy to arrange a home visit."

Contact him on 07791 498977 or email cllr.paul.brothwood@dud-leymc.org.uk

Housing proposal

THREE homes could be built next to a pub in Netherton. The properties would be built on a strip of land next to the White Swan at the junction of Swan Street and Baptist End Road. Dudley Council planners are due to make a decision in the next few weeks.

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THERE was a time when old folk would jovially tell you that the great thing about being grandparents, rather than parents, was that "you can hand the kids back at the end of the day." Having observed a number of frazzled sixtysomethings in charge of under-10s in the school holidays, I bet some of them would be happy to pick the little blighters up at 8am and hand them back at 9am.

"TOOK ages to find your house, mate. Went the wrong way up the bypass, had to stop and ask the way three times. Miserable weather, innit? Who'd you fancy for the Cup? Went fishing yesterday down the canal, caught a nice roach. Just sign here for your package, pal." Amazon says its parcels may soon be delivered by drones.

NICK Clegg's wife, the dazzlingly exotic Miriam Gonzalez Durantez, seems surprised to have been served Hellmann's mayonnaise at a Downing Street function. I sympathise, chuck. You really can't beat Tesco Salad Cream, can you?



I AM not sure whether you can judge much in the first month after a referendum. Things may yet go belly-up. But so far the sky has not fallen in, the FTSE index is doing well, the pound has stabilised at a lower level and there is news of investment in Britain

in everything from medical research to fast food and housebuilding. There is talk of free-trade agreements with Canada, Australia, China and India, and even warnings of a sudden spike in immigration as EU citizens rush to the honeypot and powerhouse that Brexit Britain may become.

A SYRIAN refugee family resettled on the Scottish island of Bute claim the place is full of old people who go there to die. I wonder if they die of the cooking? Bute is forever stuck in my mind as the place where, many years ago, I had the worst meal of my life. It was advertised on the menu as "mince". I assumed it would be served in a tasty, spicy sauce. Not a chance. It was a sloppy dollop of grey minced beef, boiled to extinction in salty water and served with a scowl.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Film on soccer ace not just a Distant dream



The film team of Connor Ashmore, Hayden Hill, Marcus Distant, Gary Rogers, Kev McDonagh, Afonso Araujo by the Duncan Edwards statue

FOOTBALL legend Duncan Edwards is to be honoured in a film written and directed by a fan from his hometown.

"Duncan Edwards - The Boy Who Had It All" is the working title of a short work by filmmaker Marcus Distant, from Dudley.

Edwards, who lived on the Priory Estate, was one of the famous 'Busby Babes' at Manchester United. He was only 21 when he died as a result of the Munich air disaster on February 6, 1958.

Regularly seeing the Edwards statue in Dudley inspired Marcus to create a film on the local hero, and he has carried out meticulous research by looking through history books and biographies in order to gain an accurate picture of his life in the town.

"Over the past year, I have researched Duncan's life in great detail and found him more and more inspiring at every step," he said.

However before Marcus' vision to create an inspiring film can become reality, he needs to raise around £5,000 to get it into production.

Marcus studied drama and theatre performance at the University of Wolverhampton, before moving into screen writing. He has



Legend Duncan Edwards

turned his attention to the footballer's childhood growing up in Dudley, and plans to use special effects to create a flashback sequence.

He has assembled a skilled production team, and given that the script is only 15 pages long they hope that once the funding is secured they can get the film made relatively quickly.

The project has been given the consent of Edwards' family and Dudley Council, who will allow the team to film at the town museum's Duncan Edwards exhibit.

The plan is to upload the completed film of between 10 to 13 minutes long, to YouTube so it is available to the public. They will also enter it into competitions, with the aim of turning it into a feature film.

Windfall will help the arts to thrive

ARTS Council England is investing £1.6 million into 12 arts and cultural organisations in the West Midlands to help them build successful and sustainable fundraising models.

The organisations include Sandwell's The People's Orchestra and Black Country Touring, which will both receive £150,000.

Frances Land, co-artistic director of Black Country Touring, said: "This is really fantastic news."

"It will be invaluable in supporting our fundraising capacity over the next three years, helping to strengthen the company for the future and enabling us to continue making available high quality performing arts for the diverse communities of the Black Country."

The investment comes from the Arts Council's Catalyst Evolve programme and will cover the organisations until 2018. Money raised by the organisations will be matched by the fund over the next three years.

Peter Knott, area director from the Arts Council England, said: "Across the Midlands, arts and cultural organisations are working hard to secure alternative sources of income."

"Over the coming years, I'm looking forward to seeing how our match funding can make a real impact locally, delivering greater returns and helping our region's world-class arts and culture continue to thrive."

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Film follows the descent of huge building into nothing more than rubble



Felled like a mighty oak – rubble is all that is left of the once-dominating structure

A TIMELAPSE video showing how the demolition of Birmingham's landmark Central Library evolved has been released online.

The library, which has stood in the city centre for four decades, has been knocked down as part of a huge £500 million revamp.

It was once the cultural centre of the Second City, but has been torn apart thanks to a legion of machines.

Bulldozed

The video speeds up the eight-month demolition of the iconic structure into a matter of minutes.

It shows how the iconic structure was bulldozed from the top down – then split into two before finally being entirely razed to the ground.



The first part of the timelapse video, with the Brutalist-style building in tact



The demolition continues, with a careful eye on surrounding buildings



The new library begins to get more prominent in the background



Not much left for the expert demolition team to tackle in the square

The end of an era as Brum's brutalist library is no more

Workers from Birmingham-based demolition specialist DSM were tasked with the major overhaul of the land.

Machinery had to smash through layers of concrete at the site over Paradise Circus, which has forced road and route closures.

The work disrupted last year's German and

craft market events in the city after the route for people to walk between both was closed due to the works.

Office buildings, a hotel and open air walkways will be created on the area currently occupied by Central Library, Adrian Boulton Hall and the Copthorne Hotel.

Motorists have faced severe delays in and around the city centre as traffic has been re-routed around Paradise Circus island.

Construction work on the first of the new office blocks is expected to begin imminently. The first two buildings to be built will be completed during 2018 will be called One

and Two Chamberlain Square. This will total more than 350,000 sq ft of office space.

English Heritage put in a bid to have Birmingham Central Library, which opened in 1974, awarded listed status in 2009. The Central Library shut after the new £188 million Library of Birmingham opened in 2013.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Never mind EU vote, I want VHS to remain

IT'S funny how the most important things are often overshadowed by events.

While the past few weeks have seen wall-to-wall coverage of Britain's vote to leave the EU, the change of prime minister, virtual civil war in the Labour Party, and a new England manager, the demise of the video cassette recorder seems to have been forgotten.

While the precise details seem to be hidden under a veil of secrecy, it seems that the last VHS video rolled off a production line in China sometime last week.

To be honest, I thought they had gone out of production years ago, but apparently they were still selling reasonably well in the United States. Presumably to farm hands in the Deep South who worry that Donald Trump might be a bit of a trendy liberal.

But while it's easy to scoff, aren't the Alabama ranch hands the ones who have got it right? After all, what is the advantage of the DVD recorder or the digital memory box over the good old VHS? Both record television programmes, both play them back. The only beneficiaries are the people who make money selling the new tech.

For this reason, I've still got a video recorder, although using it in the digital TV age does present its challenges. Five years after the big switchover, I still haven't properly mastered how to record TV programmes through a Freeview box. On the plus side, there hasn't been anything on TV over that time that I've actually wanted to record.

□□□

FOR many years, there was one thing visitors passing through the pretty Herefordshire village of Leintwardine had no excuse for doing. Speeding.

With clear signs pointing out the 30 limit at regular intervals, there was never any doubt about how fast you could go.

At least there wasn't until last month, when the local council removed the signs following police complaints they did not comply with regulations.

Apparently, repeater signs highlighting the speed limit are not allowed where there is a system of street lights, meaning anybody clocked for speeding could get off on a technicality.

Pedants will take great pleasure in pointing out that lit streets have a default 30mph limit unless otherwise stated. But road safety isn't supposed to be a board game with bonus points for catching people out.

I'm not sure who comes out of this the worst: the clowns who drew the bizarre rules up in the first place, the too-clever-by-half lawyers who exploited the loophole, or the police who seem more concerned with making their fines stick than slowing down the traffic.

One thing I am sure of though; none of them have made our roads safer.



A soldier keeping watch in a captured German trench



The book's author Hugh Sebag Montefiore



Soldiers have a break and smoke round a tank on the battlefield

Cowards slur against regiment laid to rest

A new book recalls how a regiment's bravery at the Battle of the Somme was questioned. **MARION BRENNAN** reports

IT is the most damning slur that could be attributed to any regiment – that they were cowards.

But it is an accusation that was made against the South Staffordshires following the carnage of the first day of the Battle of the Somme 100 years ago.

A new book on the battle recalls the little-known story of the alleged blemish on the reputation of the regiment, who were accused of 'having failed to close with the enemy'.

On July 1, 1916, after soldiers from the North and South Staffordshire regiments had been cut down while attempting to break through the German frontline west of the Somme village of Gommecourt, a British intelligence officer filed a report which described the scene.

It read: "After the attack was abandoned, I examined the scene from the branches of a tall tree on the outskirts of Fonquevillers (west of Gommecourt), and could see the dead and wounded like a high water mark close to the German wire."

This was proof that the Staffordshire regiments' soldiers had not stayed in their trenches but had been stopped in their tracks by the failure of the British artillery to cut the German barbed wire.

Yet despite this evidence, allegations were made by one of Britain's top generals that the failure of the attack spearheaded by the Staffordshire regiments had been because of 'a lack of offensive spirit', or, putting it more bluntly, cowardice.

In an attempt to find those responsible, General Edmund Allenby, commander of the 3rd Army, ordered Lieutenant General Thomas Snow, commander of the V11th Corps, which included the 46th Division, to convene a court of inquiry. One of the questions was why the division's 137th Brigade had failed to 'close



Captain Howard Vivian Mander, centre, with colleagues in trenches at the Somme

with the enemy'. The allegation appeared to be particularly aimed at the men from the South Staffordshire Regiment.

It had been involved with two attacks that day. No evidence presented at the inquiry suggested that its men in the 1st/6th South Staffordshire Regiment had failed to advance over the top at zero hour, 7.30am, when the whistles blew.

Soldier after soldier described how they had advanced as ordered, and had either been held up by the uncut wire, or had been scythed down by German gunshells while attempting to pass through the few gaps in the wire that had been created by British shelling. A few men even described how they had reached the German frontline and had thrown grenades at the enemy before being forced back.

The battalion suffered more than 230 casualties, representing almost 50 per cent

of those who had attacked. When it came to the follow-up attack – scheduled for 3.30pm – nothing happened. In spite of being ordered to attack, the 1st/5th South Staffordshires had remained in their trenches. It was only when evidence was given during the course of the inquiry that the slur against them could be cleared up. According to that evidence, the morning attack had highlighted two major problems.

The wire in front of the South Staffordshires' right and centre had only been cut in a few narrow lanes.

The second obstacle, as pointed out by the battalion's Captain Howard Vivian Mander, of the Wolverhampton family dynasty, in relation to the lane opposite him, was that it was covered by a machine gun. There were piles of dead and dying men heaped in the gap who had been shot down while trying to

pass through the wire in an attempt to reach the German frontline. To avoid this problem, the 5th South Staffordshires were instructed to slip to the left for the follow-up attack that afternoon.

But that exacerbated the second problem – the slow progress of the South Staffordshire's reserve company to the British frontline. They were delayed by thick glutinous mud and the bodies of dead comrades at the bottom of the communication trenches leading to the frontline.

According to one soldier, it was 'almost impossible to make progress.' Casualties were 'very heavy' because of 'the bombardment and the congestion'. Many who fell 'disappeared beneath the mud'. He 'stumbled over many bodies which were out of sight while walking' towards the frontline.

Major WA Wistance, who was responsible for organising the attack by the 1st/5th South Staffordshires, asked whether he could postpone it until all his men were in their correct positions. But he was told the assault must go ahead.

Message

The inquiry heard that he then informed two 18-year-old subalterns in the frontline, who would have to pass on the order for the charge, that he would send them a message when it was time to go.

However, minutes before zero hour, an explosion from an enemy shell buried the major, and the message was never given. The men remained in their trenches but it was not out of cowardice, as the hearing revealed.

The book's author Hugh Sebag Montefiore said: "People know about the first day of the Somme but they don't really talk about the inquiry that went on afterwards and, as a result, it is little known. And it's not really surprising as this was the worst thing you could accuse a regiment of."

"But the Staffordshires were completely exonerated. The evidence showed that there had been a breakdown in communication and proved that the regiment were not cowards."

Somme: Into The Breach by Hugh Sebag Montefiore is published by Viking Penguin, price £25.

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Unable to continue services

EACH September the members of the Stourbridge Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association have organised a service of Remembrance in Oldswinford Parish Church and lately in Mary Stevens Park on Battle of Britain Sunday.

In 2014 I announced at the end of the parade service that we would not be having further services.

However 2015 was the 75th anniversary of the 1940 Battle of Britain so we organised a service to mark that special occasion.

In January his year the branch members again began to think about the difficulties we faced holding the annual service with depleted numbers. In June we discussed whether we should be planning for September 19.

We concluded, sadly, that we are unable to continue the annual park services. We are very sorry to disappoint so many of the pub-

lic who have joined us each year. In further discussions about September we decided, as a branch, to gather together on Battle of Britain Day (September 15 each year) for a brief act of remembrance and to lay our wreath at the park memorial.

We have met each year with memories of the men and women who have served in the Royal Air Force since 1918 and who lost their lives especially those who lived in the town and we shared our lives with around the world.

Our thanks go to our MPs who joined us each year, the Mayor and our local councillors who have supported us, the members of the Air Training Corps especially the members of their band, the local St John Ambulance, the police, the PA team and the park staff.

REVD TOM CHAPMAN
Chairman/Chaplain

What will happen to vulnerable

AS a volunteer with Age UK Dudley - and I have used services offered by Springboard - I feel angry at the cuts by Dudley Council and the lottery to these two services which help retired (who have not got a lot of money), handicapped and housebound people.

For the people who do not know, Age UK volunteers give up their time to visit housebound lonely people or to telephone people who may not speak to anyone else, perhaps only carers who rush in and out because of the number of people they have to look after.

I wonder if the councilors have thought that they could help by giving up some of their pay/expenses and just do the job like others for nothing.

What is going to happen to all these lonely vulnerable people? You might need the service sometime.

J DAVIES

Kingswinford

We all have a right to our own opinion

I AM fed up with people who voted remain who infer that those who voted leave to be aged, uninformed, racist and lacking any form of intelligence.

Their remarks are always rude, insulting and offensive.

We all have a right to our own opinion when voting and one way or another, have to accept the outcome.

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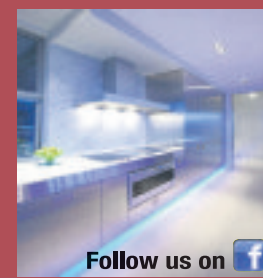
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Agree with cutbacks - but not this

OH dear, Dudley Council, what have you done?

As a volunteer working with Age UK, Dudley, I know how the service we give will affect the older generation who depend on us.

I am a good neighbour volunteer.

I spend quite a few hours of my time to visit elderly people to chat and have a cuppa.

The joy on their faces says it all for me, so, Dudley Council, you go out and ask the clients who can't get out, and who may not see anybody for days or weeks, what it will do to them.

I am well aware of the cutbacks you have had to make but this is a bad choice.

I will not disappoint my clients like you have.

J BENNETT
Age UK volunteer
Lower Gornal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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EMAIL

dudley.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

The frog population has been decimated

THIS time of the year is special for many of those with a garden pond, with frogs. If you are lucky you will see baby frogs struggling to leave the pool and reach dry land.

From then on you could find them mainly under cover anywhere as they attempt to hide from predators, while at the same time looking for a safe haven. Sadly the mortality rate must be very high. As for those that mature into fully grown frogs, what do they eat in their early years to keep themselves going?

Overall in many areas the population has been decimated through more and more demand on open spaces. When winter approaches I try and create as much ground cover as I can in the garden for frogs that don't hibernate in the pool. I will keep flying the flag for frogs as long as I can.

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Percy Stallard, pioneer racer at Brooklands



Viking Cycles ran a very successful racing team. This show team members in 1951



Bob Thom led the Viking Cycles team. Here he is in a road race



Hugh Porter, winner of four world pursuit titles

Town ahead of the field for producing bicycles

WOLVERHAMPTON used to be the most important town for bicycle manufacturing in the country.

At the end of the 19th century there were 30 cycle manufacturers in the town and only five in Nottingham. A total of over 80 have been identified in Wolverhampton over the years.

These range from major makers like Sunbeam, Star, Wearwell and Viking to small back street workshops.

The skill-base of the town was always literally metal bashing, tinplate manufacture, and this translated easily to making bicycles when the craze for them spread across the country in the late 19th century. The 'Rolls-Royce' of makers was Sunbeam, op-

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

erating from the huge Sunbeam land works on Penn Road, with their gold pinstripping, and the chain enclosed in a 'little oil bath'.

The mighty Villiers Company was started just to make cycle parts for Sunbeam, initially pedal blocks. Many manufacturers moved on to making motorbikes, often, initially, by attaching a small engine to a bicycle frame, like Wearwell making Wolf motorbikes.

Cycle racing was hugely popular in the town, with crowds of thousands flocking to the Molineux to watch the races, before the football team took

over the site. One of the most influential racers in Britain was Percy Stallard who was born in his father's cycle shop in Broad Street, and pioneered mass start road races, like the Tour de France, when the national authorities only licensed time trials.

After the war Viking Cycles ran a very successful racing team led by Bob Thom, and the town's main cycling club Wolverhampton Wheelers produced great champions like Hugh Porter and Andy Tennant.

The cycle makers have all gone now, but the Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre feature the city's bike heritage with examples of Sunbeam, Wearwell and Viking bicycles on display, and are always looking for other examples.



Peter and Harry Stant on Wearwell and Viking cycles at the Heritage Centre



Most famous Sunbeam bicycle devotee, Edward Elgar



Andy Tennant, one of the current top British cyclists

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College course adds up to new life for Stan, 87

A PENSIONER has shown age is no barrier after returning to the classroom 73 years after leaving school.

Stan Holley has not let being 87 years old stop him from attending English and maths lessons every Friday at Stourbridge College.

"Coming to college has given me a new lease of life," said Mr Holley, from Stourbridge, who left school aged 14 to train as a carpenter.

"I enrolled on my courses last September and it's done me a lot of good to be able to better myself," he said.

Stan is also getting on well with his classmates, including sharing a fist bump with 19-year-old fellow maths and English student Liam Thomas.

Fazed

Teachers have noted how the great-grandfather has not only got to grips with everything from grammar to graphs, his exam marks have also improved as well.

"I achieved 75 per cent and 69 per cent in my last maths and English tests and I am aiming for top marks," he said. "I've come this far so it seems silly not to aim higher. Being in college hasn't fazed me at all.

"Everyone here wants the same thing, which is to learn and we all support one another. The teachers are fantastic too."

Mr Holley's family, including his two sons and three great-grandchildren, are also keeping a close eye on his progress.

He said: "My family have been encouraging me to keep active. I was a carpenter for 50 years and retired to take care of my late wife who was ill.

"I kept up with the carpentry, fixing up a few bits of furniture around the house but I'm not physically able to do as much as I used to.

"This is what spurred me into com-



Stan Holley, aged 87, with fellow student Liam Thomas, 19

ing back to education, along with becoming a widower.

"I'm so glad I became a student again. I do have homework and the lessons can be challenging, but they're also quite social.

"There's a wide mix of people. Although we all like to have a laugh and joke, we soon knuckle down when our teachers expect us to," he said.

On completing his Functional Skills English and maths programmes, Stan hopes to begin Level 1 qualifications in September.

"There's so much out there to discover, especially with emails and researching things online," Stan added. "I love the idea of being able to explore and having something to show for it afterwards by way of an exam result, essay mark and qualification."

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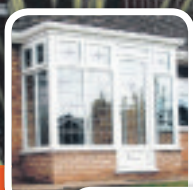
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Sons will never forgive their brutal killer father

THE devastated family of Paul Abbott have vowed never to forgive him for the savage murder of his wife Jackie.

Their son Martyn said: "To listen to the detail of the injuries she suffered was truly heartbreaking."

"The fact that he was the man who was supposed to love and care for her makes it far more difficult to understand."

"I do not think we will ever come to terms with it. It is the hardest thing we have every had to deal with. We all worked together and lived together. We have got to pick ourselves up and start again from scratch. We are committed to keeping her name alive and the reopening of the business in her name is the start of that."

Birthday

The 25-year-old and brother Ryan, 22, launched JMR Tackle on what would have been her 55th birthday a couple of months ago – the title includes the initial of their Christian names and that of their mother – on the Enterprise Trading Estate in Brierley Hill where Mrs Abbott, her husband and their two sons ran a similar business until the murder.

The brothers said: "Mum was such a happy fun loving person we want to pay tribute to her in a positive way."

Martyn added: "We cannot explain our pain at the loss of our beloved mother. He should have been protecting her and us."

As his father from Lodge Crescent, Netherton started a life sentence with a minimum 15 years behind bars for the murder, Martyn added: "We have lost two of the most important people in our lives."

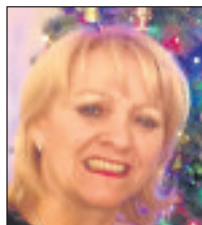
Mr Jonathan Rose, defending Abbott told Wolverhampton Crown Court when sentence was passed: "There is nothing I can say or he can do to



Sons Martyn and Ryan Abbott



Killer Paul Abbott



Victim Jacqueline Abbott

change the hurt he caused that night." Both Mr and Mrs Abbott each had two children from a previous relationship before they married and together had Martyn and Ryan. It is understood that his first wife left him and moved to Wales in a bid to escape from his increasingly threatening behaviour.

The 57-year-old businessman bludgeoned Mrs Abbott at least 16 times over the head and body with a hammer while chasing her round the house and into the garden after she had made up her mind to leave him.

The couple – married for 28 years – had increasingly argued over his gambling during the final year of the victim's life, it was said. He refused to give his wife her wages on December

3 and two days later she went alone to visit long time friend Pat, who said: "She was more than a sister to me. Her loss has left a huge void in my life."

Meanwhile he had blown £11,500 in two days at a casino. When Jackie returned on December 11 to go to an Elvis tribute concert, she wanted to attend with friends, not her husband.

He snatched her handbag looking for his ticket which he feared was to be given to somebody else, sparking a struggle. Abbott grabbed a hammer while she frantically tried to protect herself from the onslaught.

He pleaded guilty to murder and was ordered to spend at least 15 years in prison before becoming eligible for parole.

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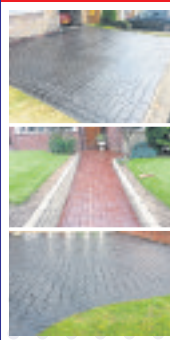
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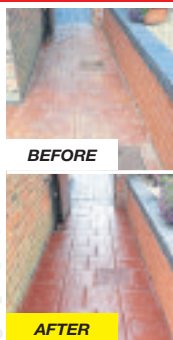
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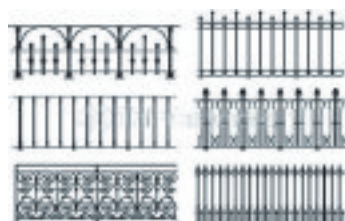
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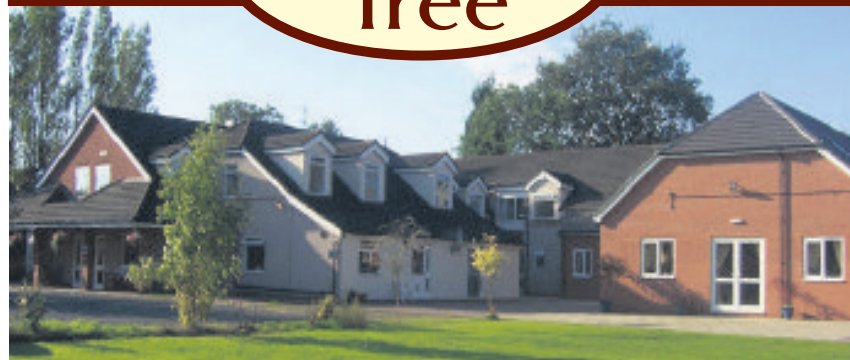


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Radiographer struck off over indecent images of children

INDECENT images of children were discovered on a radiographer's laptop while he was staying at a flat at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

Anthony Davies has now been struck off after being convicted of possessing images of girls as young as 12. His secret was uncovered when a friend logged on to his laptop at the hospital flat where he was living, a Health and Care Professions Council disciplinary panel was told.

Beacon Centre funds boost to tune of £119k

THE Beacon Centre for the Blind has been awarded more than £119,000 by two leading funding groups.

The centre in Wolverhampton Road, Sedgley, has been awarded the cash by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund.

The money will support 100 visually impaired people over the age of 24 living in the Wolverhampton area.

It will help them to find employment and boost social skills through IT training, cookery courses and financial workshops.

It follows Dudley Council cutting £250,000 of funding a year to the charity.

Head of charity operations Katie Jobling said: "We want to break down barriers to employment by improving people's confidence. Improving people's life skills will help them throughout their working life."

"We are looking forward to forging new partnerships as we deliver this project."

They had to decide whether Davies, aged 26, could have a future in the profession following his convictions. He had been working at Russells Hall for around two years when the discovery was made in 2014. When his laptop was seized, no images were found as a new operating system had been installed which would have erased any that were there, the panel heard.

However, 36 Category C images were discovered when experts analysed his phone. A Category C image is an indecent image of a child, but not one involving sexual activity.

Expectation

Davies pleaded guilty to making indecent images on his laptop and phone at Dudley Magistrates Court last October. He was given a four-year jail term, suspended for 24 months, and a supervision order.

Panel members concluded hospital patients 'would not expect to be treated by a radiographer who had so recently been convicted of offences of this nature', and that 'the expectation would be underlined by the fact that Davies is still subject to a suspended sentence of imprisonment'.

Paula Clark, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Following his arrest he was immediately suspended and then referred to his professional body. He has not worked for the Trust since October 2015."

GB medal hope's room with a view



Gymnast Kristian Thomas at the Rio Olympic Village

AS time counts down to the start of Rio Olympics continues, Wolverhampton's Kristian Thomas showed off his room with a view.

The 27-year-old who led the men's British gymnastics team to a bronze medal at London 2012, shared the snap on Twitter after his arrival ahead of the opening ceremony tomorrow (Friday).

Thomas' high-storey room overlooks an enviable palm tree lined swimming pool at the Olympic and Paralympic Village at Barra da Tijuca, west of central Rio de Janeiro. The complex has the capacity to accommodate 17,950 athletes and technical staff at Games time in 3,604 flats.

The team bronze medal earned in London was the first podium medal for a GB gymnastics team for 100 years.

Born in Wolverhampton, Thomas trained with the Earls Gymnastics Club in Halesowen and claimed his first senior medal aged just 17 with a team bronze at the Commonwealth Games in 2006. Four years ago, he also helped to secure a team gold medal at the European Championships.

In 2013, despite two major injuries, Thomas secured Team GB's first ever World Championship vault medal, taking home the bronze.

The following year he triumphed at the Commonwealth Games with team gold and vault and high bar silver, followed by European Team silver and the high bar bronze. Last year Thomas won his first ever senior Team GB individual gold medal, in the floor at the European Championships.

Drivers are warned of disruptions

DRIVERS are facing huge disruption due to roadworks along the A449.

Two separate schemes will take place on the Stourbridge Road stretching from the edge of Wolverhampton down to Wombourne.

Parts of the dual carriageway will be restricted to a single lane between the Penn Road roundabout and Wombourne as repairs are carried out on street lights and signage.

The whole scheme is expected to last until August 11, with drivers warned they face major disruption. There will be no work over this weekend.

Staffordshire County Council said the work – part of a £230,000 investment on its roads – would make 'significant improvements' to the network. Highways chiefs also said the work would be carried out with the 'minimum of disturbance to the local community'.

Kingswinford councillor Patrick Harley said the roadworks would cause problems but that improvements to the road were needed.

He said: "The roadworks are essential. Both authorities in Dudley and Staffordshire have been liaising and they have got to try and get it done with the minimum impact on people."

"It is never easy having to divert people, it is always causing chaos but unfortunately it needs to be done."

Family fun day held in aid of rugby club

A FAMILY fun day is being held in aid of Dudley Kingswinford Rugby Club this month.

Brierley Hill-based law firm Higgs & Sons is putting on the event in aid of the Stroke Association on August 21. The event, off Swindon Road, Wall Heath, runs from noon to 3pm. It will include a sports day, barbecue and children's activities.

For further information call 0345 1115050.

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MPs in 'cronyism' claim to Cameron over honours list

A DUDLEY MP has led the criticism of former Prime Minister David Cameron, accusing him of 'cronyism' over the honours system.

Mr Cameron was accused by Black Country MPs as undermining the honours system after a leaked list suggested he was rewarding supporters in his final act as PM.

The 48 suggestions in Mr Cameron's resignation honours list include some of the biggest names in the failed Remain campaign, as well as personal aides, Tory donors and his wife Samantha's personal stylist.

Young people bemoan lack of job help

MORE than half of young people in the West Midlands said they had no support from anyone when searching for a job, a survey has revealed.

Some 54 per cent of those aged 16 to 25 complained of the lack of support in the poll by the Prince's Trust.

John O'Reilly, director for The Prince's Trust in Central England, said: "All too often young people are locked out of jobs and other opportunities simply because of where they've started in life."

A total of 44 per cent of young people from poorer backgrounds said they didn't know anyone who could help them find a job, compared to 26 per cent of their more advantaged peers.

While 20 per cent of those questioned found some work experience through their parents, only 10 per cent from a poorer background said they did. And 26 per cent think that people like them do not get good jobs, compared to eight per cent of their peers.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "David Cameron is dishing out honours like sweets to his friends and flunkies. The only thing that surprises me is that he hasn't given one to Larry, the Downing Street cat."

Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson, MP for West Bromwich East, said: "That Mr Cameron proposes to reward his friends network on such a huge scale will not only bring the honours system into disrepute, it will undermine the reputation of Theresa May."

Proof

"It's cronyism, pure and simple and proof the Tories will always put their own interests before those of the country."

The honours list features South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson, the Government's Chief Whip, who has been put forward for a CBE. He declined to comment.

Tory party chairman Patrick McLoughlin, who was Chief Whip and then Transport Secretary under Mr Cameron, has been proposed for a knighthood. The list is top heavy with Remain campaigners, including former Chancellor George Osborne, Philip Hammond, Michael Fallon, David Lidington, and campaign leader Will Straw.

Pupils wrap up first aid victory



The Colley Lane Primary School first aid team which won the national schools first aid competition

CHILDREN from a Halesowen school banded together to win this year's prestigious St John Ambulance National First Aid competition.

Six Year 5 and 6 pupils from Colley Lane Primary beat competition across the country to win the coveted title in Leicester.

They had to carry out first aid exercises which they had learned in lessons after school on Fridays. Each

pupil received a medal for winning and the school's name was etched into the trophy.

The school's business manager Tracey Lewis-Freeman said: "It is absolutely fantastic. Everyone is so proud of them. To actually get to the final is a big thing and then to win it is a great achievement."

The competition held at the Warn- ing Zone in the city saw schools from

across the United Kingdom take part. The school beat others in regional finals before going into the national final.

The pupils had practised first aid in classes held outside school hours with teachers. "They did an after school club for it," said Tracey. "But it was not part of the normal curriculum. The teachers gave up their own time to teach the pupils."

High success rate for new hepatitis drug

PATIENTS at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals have access to a new family of drugs to help treat Hepatitis C.

A multi-disciplinary approach by the trust's gastroenterology and pharmacy teams has seen patients treated with Direct Acting Antivirals, or DAAs - with success rates approaching 100 per cent.

Across the country, more than 200,000 people are infected with the virus with success rates being below 60 per cent.

Project leader, consultant gastroenterologist Saket Singhal has worked closely with Lead HIV/GUM Pharmacist Amardeep Singh and liver specialist nurse Clare Smith.

Mr Singhal said: "We've been administering DAAs since SWBH joined the regional Operational Development Network in July 2015.

"The major benefits for patients are shorter treatment times, no need to take a course of injections and a reduction in the risks of side effects, liver damage and of developing liver failure or liver cancer in the future.

"We've successfully treated 30 patients over the last 12 months and many more patients are waiting to start these new treatments.

"Overall, we estimate that DAA treatment will benefit more than 5,000 patients in the area we serve."

Cycle challenge brings in £1,300 for hospital

A ROWLEY Regis school brought the money rolling in for Birmingham Children's Hospital after completing a cycling challenge. The task for children and staff at St Michael's School was originally to cycle the distance from Birmingham to Paris on exercise equipment set up at the school.

However, they surpassed the target mark half way through the day and went on to travel even further, raising £1,300 for the hospital's Star Appeal.

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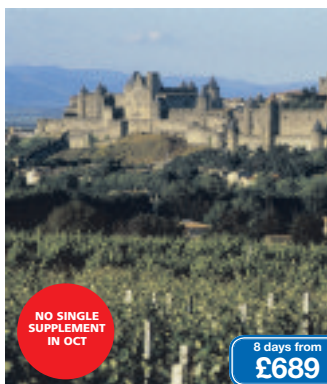


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Pupils given ACE advice on money management

BUILDING society bosses have helped pass on some vital money-saving tips to pupils in Tipton.

More than 80 Year 11, 12 and 13 pupils at ACE Academy took part in a special 'Money Go Round' workshop delivered by the West Brom.

Both Dudley branch manager Jan Sanders and Lewis Jones, who manages the Tipton branch, spoke to youngsters aged 15-18 and passed on advice about looking after their money.

This included understanding the various differences between a bank and a building society, what customers can use them for, the importance of budgeting, and the dangers of getting into unaffordable debt.

Retail manager Jan said: "It was fantastic to have the chance to go to ACE Academy and offer a general introduction to money and how it affects everybody on a day-to-day basis.

"Money can be a very confusing subject and it is important, through initiatives like this workshop, to get young people thinking about the various issues that arise from an early age."

Julie Cornfield, director of sixth form at ACE Academy on Alexandra Road, added: "Feedback from the students afterwards was very positive and they all appreciated a talk on such a real topic.

"Management of money will increasingly become an important issue for the students who attended the presentation and they were given some very important and wise guidance."

The West Brom has a network of 37 branches that stretches across the region and into Wales as well.



Lauren Paskin, Mahfuz Rahman and Laurie May Mole with Lewis Jones and Jan Sanders

Archbishop to meet Merry Hill shoppers

THE Archbishop of Canterbury will be leading prayers and hymns at Merry Hill shopping centre when he visits the Black Country in October.

On Friday, October 7, the Archbishop, Justin Welby, will meet schoolchildren at Worcester Cathedral. There will also be an afternoon tea at the Three Counties Showground for members of the rural community.

The next day there will be a breakfast event for business leaders followed by a 'retreat in daily life' service at Worcester Cathedral for the clergy and lay ministers of the Diocese. All are then welcome to come to St Stephen's Church in Redditch from 1.30pm for craft, stories and refreshments for families.

In the evening, the Archbishop will meet members of the interfaith community at Dudley Council House, followed by 'The Power of Hope', when he will be in conversation with Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai at Dudley College in front of a specially invited audience.

The visit will end on October 9 with a visit to Merry Hill shopping centre from 2.30pm, concluding with a 'Songs of Praise' style event.

MP voices fears over rail service reduction

THE Labour party's deputy leader has warned fewer high speed trains could stop at Sandwell and Dudley railway station under plans being consulted on by the government.

West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson has said it would be 'outrageous' if a current consultation on the future of the Inter-City West Coast Rail line ends with a reduced number of fast trains stopping at the station in Oldbury.

Mr Watson said he fears the project 'could mean fewer stops at stations like Sandwell' which would harm Black Country businesses.

Currently four trains an hour travel between the station in Bromford Lane and London Euston - with three changing in Birmingham and one direct.

Mr Watson said that the worst-case scenario for some smaller stations would be one train arriving every two hours.

Focus

He said: "The responses to this consultation will help determine what the government ask for in the tender documents for the future of the franchise.

"The consultation has a heavy focus on faster journey times, which could mean fewer stops at stations like Sandwell in order to reduce journey times to other destinations. This would be a real problem for businesses and commuters."

The rail franchise currently operates primarily on the West Coast Mainline between London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, North Wales, Glasgow

By David Cosgrove

and Edinburgh with stops at intermediate stations including Sandwell and Dudley. In a consultation document the Department for Transport warns some trains are 'very busy'.

To combat this, it suggests 'reducing the number of stops needed at intermediate stations' to ensure services between big cities are faster and less crowded.

The consultation on the service, currently operated by Virgin Trains, was due to end this week.

Mr Watson said: "Any reduction in high speed services to and from Sandwell would be outrageous. We need more high speed direct trains, not fewer services.

"There's no point in the government spending all of this money on HS2 if Sandwell residents end up getting a poorer service."

Ninder Johal, who sits on the board of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, said: "If we were to reduce the number of trains stopping at Sandwell and Dudley we could be going against the whole premise of rebalancing the economy."

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Free poetry walks held in town park

POETS in Dudley are invited to take part in three poetry walks happening this month. The free events will take place at Mary Stevens Park, in Stourbridge.

They are designed to draw inspiration from the newly-revived park and will be led by Walk Works, a community interest company that specialises in investigating local history and creative activity through outdoor events.

"We are aiming to give breathing space to ideas and approaches to making poetry that come directly out of walking in the park," said Vicki Darby Smith, co-director of Walk Works. The walks will take place on August 14, 21 and 28, starting at the park's cafe.

They will be followed by a Proms and Poetry event on September 4 running from 12-5pm at the bandstand.

For more enquiries contact Ranger Deb on 01384 815279 or 07773 078427, deborah.merrick@dudley.gov.uk, or visit www.marystevenspark.org for further information.



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Gloria Kerrigan, general manager at West Midlands Hospital, said: "We offer a complete range of cosmetic surgeries here and are proud



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People caring for people



Councillor in plea after clean-up of alleyway

A COUNCILLOR and his partner took it upon themselves to clean up an alleyway after residents complained of its condition.

Councillor Stuart Henley, for Halesowen North ward, spent several hours cleaning up the alleyway in his constituency with his partner Sue Longmore.

He then planted wild seeds along the path to spruce up the area for the future.

He said: "On July 24 after calls from residents asking for a gully to be cleared of weeds and rubbish, I took it on myself along with my partner to go and do this clean up."

"It took a couple of hours hard work but we collected around six bags of rubbish and weeds."

"After the clear up I planted wild

plant seeds along the way and hope this will help brighten up the gully.

"If any other area wishes help please get in touch and let's get a group of residents together to take pride and help clean up."

He added: "Due to hard cuts that have and are being made throughout the borough we all need to get community minded and get out there and do what we can ourselves."

"Yes we pay our taxes but we do need to do our bit."

"If we just clean up outside our own properties and maybe next door if they are unable to this would go a long way to make the areas cleaner."

"Some may be more reluctant to drop litter and let their dogs foul."



Councillor Stuart Henley who has tidied up along the roadside in Olive Hill Road, Halesowen

Offers invited on sale of former social club

A LANDMARK club which closed unexpectedly after more than 100 years has been put up for sale.

Tipton Conservative & Unionist Club on Union Street suddenly shut its doors in January. Now the 0.36 acre site is on the market as a freehold with Birmingham-based estate agents Colliers. A price tag has not been put on the property, but offers are invited.

The historic building has an extension to the rear, a 30 space car park, enclosed private yard plus beer patio with smoking shelter.

The building had previously been a flour mill before becoming a Conservative club in 1909. It had previously been home to Tipton Civic Society. Chairman Keith Hodgkins said: "It is sad to see the end of it as it was but we can only hope someone comes along and converts it into a new use."

The sale advert on Colliers states there is a pool, darts and bar room, lower ground floor/basement concert room and first floor snooker room. There is also an office and private manager's flat. No fixtures and fittings will be included in the sale.

Hefty bills for drivers after cars scratched

YOBS keyed dozens of vehicles parked on the Wrens Nest estate leaving residents with repair bills running into hundreds of pounds.

Police say they received 21 reports of cars and vans being targeted in just one night.

Officers assured residents that patrols in and around the area had now been 'stepped up'.

Neighbours in Willow Road, where it is believed around six vehicles were targeted, spoke out after the spat.

One man, who did not wish to be named, said his auntie had been visiting when her car was damaged.

He said: "In total it was probably about six vehicles that were targeted, including a couple of vans."

"It seemed that someone had gone from the top of the road to the bottom with what looked like a stone and scratched them one after another."

Estimate

"My auntie came to visit and when she came out she saw all the left side of her car scratched down that side."

"It will cost her hundreds of pounds to repair."

Another neighbour spoke of her upset at having her brand new Ford Fiesta scratched on the back door.

She said: "It's a 16 plate car and I've only had it a month. I didn't even notice until I came out at about 4.30ish. It's just unacceptable, we won't know how much it will cost until we get a bodywork estimate."

Inspector Laura Jones,

By Clare Butler

who oversees policing in the area, said a suspect had been identified and would be spoken to in due course.

She said: "This is clearly concerning for local residents and we are taking the matter extremely seriously. Our patrols in and around the area have been stepped up in order to prevent any further offences."

"A suspect has been identified and will be spoken to in due course but I would be keen to hear from anyone who may have any information about who is responsible for causing this damage."

Anyone with any concerns is urged to contact Dudley Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Earlier this year vehicles were targeted in Wall Well, Halesowen. Police released CCTV footage showing a man stroll up to an Audi and casually scratch both the passenger and driver's sides of the vehicle.

The vandal struck at about 11pm on a Friday.

First aid charity is seeking volunteers

ST John Ambulance is looking for volunteers from Dudley to help provide first aid cover at events around the Black Country.

Anyone joining the organisation is given advanced first aid training.


No previous experience or qualifications are required. Training is free.

In return, volunteers are required to attend two or more events per month to put those skills to the test out in the field.

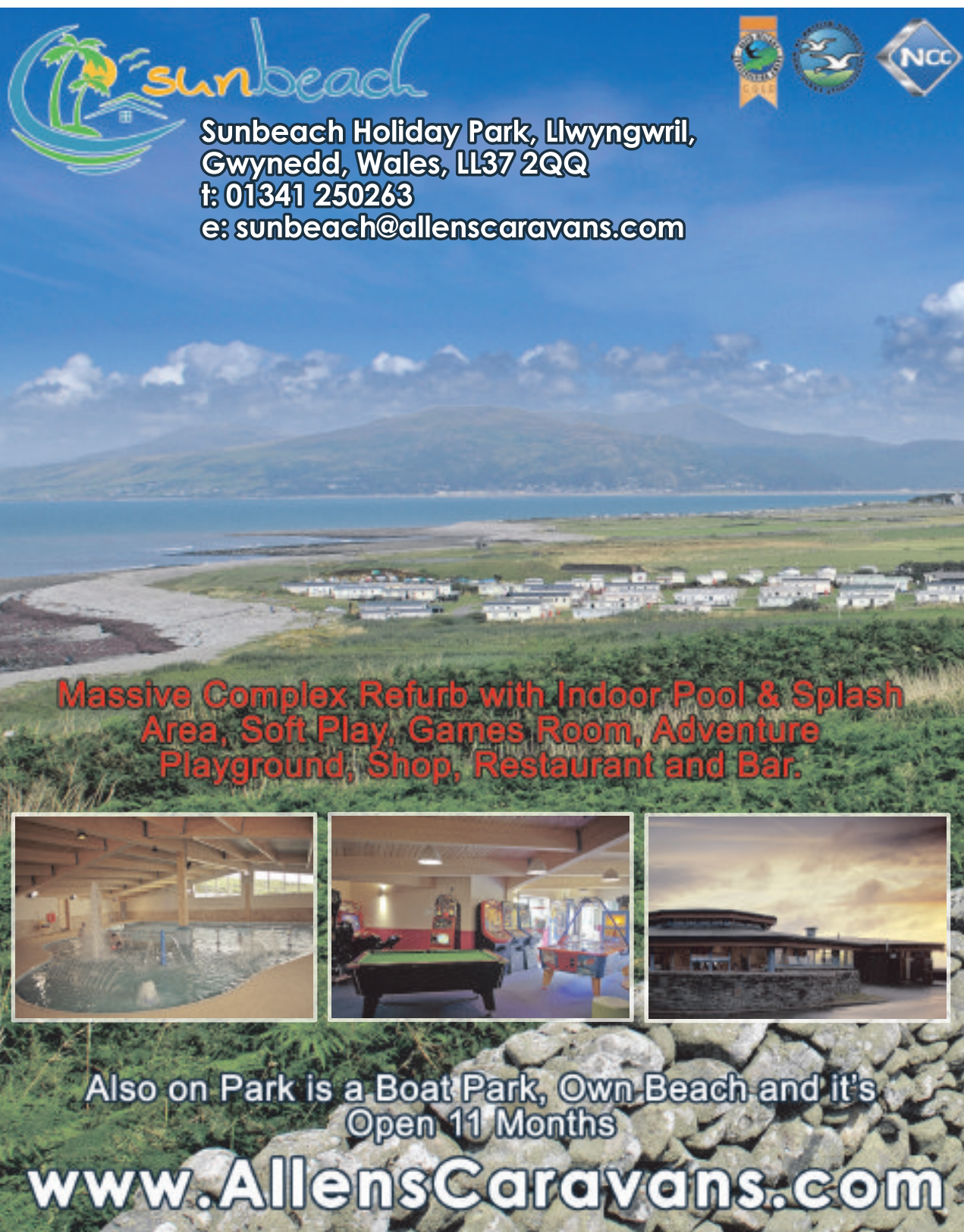
New volunteers will join the newly reopened St John Ambulance unit in Dudley and will need to attend meetings regularly at the charity's base on Vicar Street to keep their skills up to date.

St John Ambulance district manager Jack Lewis said: "If you are aged over 18, are enthusiastic and willing to learn, we want to hear from you."




The closing date for applications is August 10. Call 0121 236 6660 or visit www.sja.org.uk



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Vintage books with real ‘fairy tale’ ending

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

By John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



WE often see children’s books during our valuation days and asked how much they might sell for at auction.

The answer is it depends entirely on who the authors are, how old they are and in what condition they are but, having said all that, certain vintage children’s books do tend to catch the collector’s eye.

Really good old copies of classics such as Alice in Wonderland would definitely sell well, as would The Wind in the Willows, Anne of Green Gables and the Tales of Beatrix Potter.

There are also certain authors to look out for, such as Roald Dahl, A A Milne, Rudyard Kipling, Laura Ingells Wilder, Noel Streatfield, Raymond Briggs, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Enid Blyton – the list is endless.

Old books of fairy tales are also nice to collect and display, as are vintage volumes about nature, birds and so on written especially for children.

The Narnia classics by C S Lewis are always hugely popular, as are old copies of wonderful books such as Moonfleet and White Fang.

Older favourites like The Water Babies would sell well, as would vintage copies of Aesop’s Fables.

Pretty dust jackets do attract the buyers and Victorian and Edwardian children’s books often featured very beautifully decorated spines and jackets.

The ultimate attraction for a buyer of books at auction is a first edition, so check the publication date – if there is only one, you could be on to a winner.

Many of these books will have been well looked after,



with pages intact and illustrations unmarked, and if they have leather spines that all adds to the value.

Prices do vary dramatically and that really is down to age, rarity and condition, a first-edition of an Enid Blyton Famous Five book could

be worth hundreds if it still has its original dust jacket – but without it the value will drop to a very reduced figure.

The ‘best sellers’ in terms of vintage children’s books are usually the classics, I’ve recently seen a 1935 copy of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, with pristine book jacket and colour plates, sell for thousands on the internet, also an Enid Blyton Five Get Into Trouble first edition go for £200.

It is important to remember that the illustrator of the book makes a difference to value, so again check that any book you would like valued names the original one.

Vintage children’s books usually sell for between £10 and £100 at auction, depending on condition.

Many will have been damaged with use, had pages torn and illustrations ‘added to’ with colouring pens or lost their original jackets along the way.

So if you have a good old copy or a first edition it’s well worth getting it valued, it may well catch a collector’s eye in the saleroom.

Perry and Phillips Auctioneers hold sales of antiques and collectables on the first Tuesday of each month. Valuation days, for sale items only, are held every Wednesday at the Mill Street saleroom, from 10am until 4pm. August’s sale takes place next Tuesday, from 10.30am.

So many trends influence what we decide to eat



Healthy food options are out there

I WONDER if any of us realise the effect trends have on our food and eating habit?

This year it is all about coconut oil and superfoods, the list almost never ending but generally healthy foods full of vitamins, minerals and a source of antioxidants (believed to protect our cells).

Almonds, brazil nuts, avocados, bananas, beans, lentils, broccoli, fish and blueberries to name just a few.

It has been a few years since we were told to eat five portions of fruit and veg a day and drink two litres of water, a trend that persists and is advertised fully in all areas of our everyday life.

Over the past week we have been told to take Vitamin D supplements during the winter, the local chemist shelves were empty of Vitamin D product today. A couple of years ago Omega 3 was the ultimate requirements for improved brain function.

If we followed all the health advice on our television screens we would be confused and very poor.

Healthy lunches “on the go” are popular and the supermarkets advertise the benefits

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



of their options, including part of your “five a day” and teamed with smoothies and fruit juices. McDonalds, Subway and Greggs are improving their offerings after constant criticism.

“In Vogue” meal kits are suddenly popular, the best of healthy ingredients for your evening meal with cooking instructions included and delivered to your door. Easy for the working couple to eat well, at a price of course, and practical for rigid slimming programmes.

We have been trying “The Body Coach menus – Lean in 15”.

These recipes are generally made in 15 minutes full of protein and great flavours, it has been incredibly enjoyable and based on the social media posts very popular.

It seems well balanced and considerably

healthier than previous trends such as the Atkins Diet but it, like the others, will have a lifespan and be replaced by a new and improved version. Trendy is expensive.

There are also distinct trends when we eat out, the gastro pub has made way for the contemporary menu with grazing boards, locally sourced foods and specialist wines and beers to compliment.

International food continues to develop a place on the high street, allowing us to try wide and varied cultural tastes and the creativity of our restaurant chefs delight with unusual works of art on a plate. Who remembers nouvelle cuisine, the tiniest meal on a huge white plate, never enough to sustain life but “the thing” in the 80s?

Baking remains the favourite home trend, with popularity in decorated celebration cakes and cup cakes ever growing, spurred on by the love of Bake Off and the ever increasing list of foodie shows.

The most exciting trend of the moment though is the supermarkets sending “out of date” and excess food to food banks to benefit the less fortunate of us, long may it last.



Whether you're planning to head off now or at a later, quieter time, it is vital to consider travel insurance, not just to protect yourself but also your valuables

Make sure you are covered for great summer getaway



Some travel policies exclude pensioners

THE summer holiday has started and many of us will be looking forward to a holiday abroad.

But David Sheridan of Age UK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, warns that it’s vital to consider travel insurance to protect yourself and your valuables .

“Our own research shows the top three considerations for over 65s when purchasing travel insurance are cover for treatment of a serious illness (79%), personal injury (57%) and repatriation (54%).

“Before buying any policy, travellers should check the document details to ensure they are aware of what is and isn’t included as standard so they can travel safe in the knowledge that the insurance will cover them if it is needed.”

Age UK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin has put together the following tips to help travellers know what to look out for when purchasing a travel insurance policy.

1. Upper age limits. Insurers often include upper age limits on their policies, which means they won’t cover older travellers. So it pays to shop around and look for insurers that don’t apply such limits and will cater specifically to your needs.
2. Your health and pre-existing medical conditions. Insurers will not cover claims di-

By Sophie Madden

rectly arising from any pre-existing medical conditions unless you have declared them. There are many conditions which may seem immaterial to going on a holiday but it is always best to declare, especially common conditions such as heart conditions, cancer, breathing conditions (including asthma), and diabetes.

3. How much you plan to travel. If you are planning to make several trips in a year, you may get a better deal by buying an annual multi-trip policy rather than a number of single trips.

4. Limits on trip duration. If you decide to purchase an annual multi-trip policy, check the maximum trip duration cover. This differs across insurers and is important, especially if you’re planning a longer getaway.

5. Cover for the whole holiday. If you are purchasing single trip insurance, ensure that the policy covers you for the whole time you will be away, including the days you will be travelling on. Your policy will end at midnight on the day you specify, so make sure you purchase an extra day’s cover if you are travelling back in the early hours of the morning.

6. Policy limits. Policy limits exist for both your overall “suitcase” and for individual items. It’s important to check these

and consider covering any big ticket items separately. Make a list or take a photo of what’s included in your luggage, and, if you can, keep a receipt for any high value items.

7. European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Some insurers insist you carry an EHIC whilst travelling and many will waive the excess of your claim if you have one. However, before purchasing, check the insurer’s terms and conditions and ask what their policy includes to clarify this. It’s important to note that an EHIC is not a substitute for travel insurance.

8. Unexpected event cover. Almost every insurer is different when it comes to the unexpected events they cover. Some cover for delays or cancellations caused by volcanic ash cloud, flight delays or acts of terrorism, while others don’t.

9. Holiday activities. If you are planning on taking part in activities such as horse riding, jet skiing or scuba diving whilst on holiday, you’ll need to make sure that the policy will cover you in the event you have an accident.

10. Missed departure cover. Check the conditions of a missed departure from the insurer. Most will cover if the car or airport transfer bus breaks down for example; but if you didn’t leave enough time to get to the airport or ferry terminal, your claim could be invalid.

Antonio's future in movies lights up with latest role

A YOUNG actor who hails from Wednesbury is to appear alongside top British actors in a feature-length international film.

Antonio Aakeel will be starring alongside former Doctor Who star Billie Piper and Riz Ahmed, of Four Lions and Nightcrawler fame in a British crime thriller directed by BAF-TA-winning Pete Travis. After four auditions and a screen test, the talented 20-year-old secured the movie role of Lovely.

He caught the acting bug after being given a one-line role in the Christmas play at Holyhead Primary School in Wednesbury.

Born in Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton, he grew up around the Black Country, including Smethwick and Wednesbury – before setting his sights on fulfilling his dramatic career ambitions, taking acting lessons in Birmingham.

Antonio went on to land a small role in popular E4 show Skins, bagging the part after

auditioning against 500 other hopefuls. After a couple of lead roles in BBC drama Doctors and a prominent character role in international film The Line of Freedom, he is now set to appear on the silver screen in City of Tiny Lights, based on the 2005 novel of the same name by Patrick Neate.

He said: "I am so excited to be working with such talented actors that I've looked up to for such a long time.

"Also, coming from a working-class background, these opportunities for people like me are few and far between, so I hope working with a team of people with similar roots will inspire others to do the same."

The young actor also attended Dunstall Hill Primary School in Wolverhampton, Cape Hill Primary School, Smethwick, and Wodensborough Ormiston Academy in Wednesbury before progressing to Birmingham Metropolitan College, Sutton Coldfield campus.



Up-and-coming Wednesbury-raised actor Antonio Aakeel, with Billie Piper

Two injured as car strikes lamp post

TWO people suffered serious injuries when their car hit a lamp post in Tipton.

They were trapped in the vehicle after the incident just after 11.35pm on Monday on the A461 near the junction with Tividale Street.

West Midlands Ambulance Service was called to the incident and sent two ambulances and a community paramedic in a rapid response vehicle to the scene.

A Midlands Air Ambulance crew from Cosford also attended in a rapid response vehicle.

Ambulance service spokesman Jamie Arrowsmith said: "Two patients were left trapped in the car following the collision, having to be cut free by the fire service.

"Crews were told the car also collided with a post box after crashing into the lamp post.

"The driver, a woman teenager, was treated for a suspected fractured jaw at the scene before being transported to Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham.

"The passenger, a man believed to be in his 20s, was treated for a serious head injury and back pain before being taken to the same hospital."

Staff anger as move for car parking fees agreed

UP to 1,000 Sandwell Council workers will be forced to pay to park while at work, after bosses at the authority rubber stamped the controversial plans.

Hundreds of employees will pay £4 a day, £24 a month or £240 a year to park at the West Bromwich Street car park in Oldbury, situated next to the council house.

Unison officials blasted the decision as more than 50 members protested with placards before the council's Highways and Environment decision making session last Thursday.

Council bosses approved the plans with an added recommendation of a season ticket for employees who work three days a week at a reduced rate of £14 a month or £144 annually. It comes as two petitions – one of more than 600 signatures – and 391 objections were made after the report to introduce parking fees was put to cabinet in December.

Declined

Tony Barnsley, joint branch secretary for Sandwell Unison, said: "It is clear that staff feelings have been running very high about this, that's because it has been a staff car park for 26 years and was built as a staff car park.

"It is crazy to think that the public will use it when there are others for free and nearer the shops. Since 2010 pay in local authorities has declined by 20 per cent and people view this as a further cut to pay. I'm incredibly disappointed that while part time workers have been con-



Staff during their protest

sidered the lower paid staff have not."

However, council chiefs defended the move saying that the car park operated in the same way as other public car parks. Robin Wear, service manager for highways, said: "Part of the parking charges are not only to recover the costs of it but to enable safe use of it.

"It has not been a staff car park for the last six years and we are aware that the public do use it as it is signposted off the Oldbury ring road. We have considered the impact on lower paid staff as well as lower paid members of the public and want an equality of parking charges for everyone."

Double glazing to be put in more homes

A DOUBLE-GLAZING window programme which has seen thousands of council tenants benefit from warmer homes has been extended by Sandwell Council.

Around 6,100 single-glazed windows have been replaced with more efficient UPVC double-glazed windows – as part of a year-long £3 million contract shared between Lovell Partnerships and Vinci Construction UK Limited.

Housing bosses have taken out an option to extend the current contract by another 12 months.

The council will spend a further £3 million to complete the job which will see a further 6,100 windows replaced by July next year and around £6 million spent on the programme overall. Chiefs said the work is being carried out to all council-owned properties up to five storeys high.

When the programme is completed, around 25,700 single-glazed windows will have been replaced in council homes.

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Holidays are a time of real excitement for younger children



Debi Green advises finding ways to keep children occupied on the journey

Keep calm – and enjoy your family summer holiday

Report by Lisa Salmon

IT'S nearly time for many families to escape the miserable British weather and jet off to sunnier climes.

But for a lot of parents, a sunshine break brings the same childcare and child entertainment responsibilities they have at home – and that doesn't make for holiday relaxation.

However, plan your holiday well and take the right equipment and toys, and the whole family can have a great holiday, promise travel and parenting experts.

Here are their top tips for happy holidays with the kids...

TRAVELLING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Debi Green, founder of babygoes2.com, suggests:

∴ Take a holiday pack for toddlers of small activity items to dish out during your journey and the holiday itself. This could include a colouring book and crayons, puzzles, small toys like finger puppets, a picture or story book, and a scrapbook to put their memories from the trip in.

∴ Introduce a fixed and regular quiet time when young children always come out of the sun and concentrate on an activity from their holiday pack, and possibly have a nap. Make a communal "holiday chill area" in the shade, using lilo, towels, and pillows.

∴ Take children on a short treasure hunt and make a seaside or countryside sculpture from what they've collected.

∴ Take a few simple wrapped toys or games and create a lucky dip for mid-holiday excitement.

∴ If staying in a villa, pack a small paddling pool – fun for babies and tiny tots, and easy to monitor from your sun lounger.

∴ Organise a mini pool Olympics, which can be as simple as jumping in the pool, swimming to a rubber ring and picking up something from the pool floor, all timed.

∴ Encourage slightly older children to compile a holiday diary or scrapbook, or an online photo album.

CATER FOR SUCCESS
Catherine Cooper (www.catherinecooper.net), author of Travelling With Children: A Parent's Guide (Need 2 Know, £9.99), suggests families with young children opt for self-catering accommodation if possible.

"You can prepare meals when you want, put them down for a nap when you want and sit outside and have a glass of wine while they sleep," she points out.

Cooper also believes kids' clubs are a "godsend", although she advises parents ask questions such as: What's the children-to-adult ratio? What are the opening times? And how are the age groups split?

She adds: "You probably won't want to send them off for the whole week, but a few mornings or afternoons here and there will give you the time to relax, and them the time to make new friends – and often try out some amazing activities."

KEEP TEENS ENGAGED
Green warns that when it comes to hol-



It can be a stressful time – but get it right and holidays will create memories to savour for the whole family



Catherine Cooper's guide for travelling with children offers several useful tips

iday with teenagers, it's "slightly more tricky, since boredom looms a little larger on their horizon".

∴ If possible, choose a holiday with an element of independence – perhaps they can walk to a shop or the beach on their own.

∴ Give them their own space, perhaps a den or an area around the pool where they can chill.

∴ Plan to fend off boredom – days with a good mix of chilling and active periods work well.

GROWN-UP TIME

Parents have to make time for themselves too – it is everyone's holiday after all. Green suggests that you:

∴ Remove obvious hazards that will thwart relaxation. Choose gated pools for non-swimmers, enclosed gardens, no high balconies or outside staircases.

∴ Consider holidaying with friends or family so you can take turns to supervise, and so the children have playmates.

∴ Hire a babysitter or nanny for a few hours as often as you can afford it. Green explains: "Children are relaxed because parents are still on site, but parents can relax because the nanny is taking the responsibility of monitoring."

∴ Some resorts offer a "babe watch" service, where they'll briefly look after babies and toddlers in a shady area on the beach while parents have a stroll/swim.

∴ Choose sun loungers close to the children's pool or beach so you can easily watch the kids from a comfortable position, and also choose a room where you can relax outside while babies and younger children nap.

BE REALISTIC

"Holidays with children are not the same as romantic couples getaways or trips with friends," warns Mumsnet editor Kate Williams. "The best way to truly enjoy holidays with young children is to be realistic about what's likely to make them reasonably content."

"For all but the most adventurous, this probably involves food your children will eat, a temperate climate, comfortable sleeping arrangements, a reasonable travel time and plenty of outdoorsy possibilities – in the hope that an early night for them means a couple of hours off for you."

Never had it so good – up goes pocket money rate

CHILDREN and teenagers are in luck financially at the moment – there's been a rise in pocket money.

On average, youngsters now get £6.55 a week from their parent or guardian, marking the highest figure seen since 2007. It's also a pay rise of nearly six per cent compared with 2015, when the average weekly pocket money payout was £6.20.

More than four-fifths (81 per cent) now receive pocket money, which is also higher than the percentage in 2015.

WHO GETS THE MOST CASH?

It appears that boys have more to celebrate than girls though.

Research among eight to 15-year-olds found on average, boys get a weekly allowance of £6.93, compared to just £6.16 for girls – with this significant pocket money gender gap making boys more than 12 per cent better off.

Looking at how different age groups fare, the Halifax Pocket Money Survey also found nine-year-olds get the least pocket money, at £4.68 on average, while 14-year-olds receive most, at £8.03 typically.

Parents tend to start giving out pocket money when their child is aged six to seven.

ARE YOUNGSTERS HAPPY WITH WHAT THEY'RE GETTING?

Despite general pocket money increases, more than two-fifths (42 per cent) of children still think they should get more, although just over half of the more than 1,200 children surveyed think the amount they get's about right, and about one in five (23 per cent) believe their friends get more pocket money than they do.

The rebound in weekly pocket money payouts still has some way to go before it hits a previous record average of £8.37, reached in 2005.

SAVE OR SPLURGE?

Giles Martin, head of Halifax Savings, says: "Pocket money is a great training tool in money management and a fantastic way of instilling a sense of the value of money from an early age. Getting children to set aside even just a small amount each week can help them to develop a strong savings habit that will serve them well through to adulthood."

According to the research, nearly four-fifths (79 per cent) of children save some of their pocket money, up 70 per cent from 2015's results.

About one in eight (12 per cent) now save all of their money, up from one in 10 last year, and nearly a third save half their money, up from a quarter in 2015.

Ten-year-olds were found to be the savviest savers, with nearly nine in 10 (88 per cent) saving some or all of their pocket money. Meanwhile, 13-year-olds were least likely to save – with just over seven in 10 (71 per cent) doing so.

Parents are also doing their bit to encourage the next generation of savers. The research, which also surveyed more than 500 parents, found nine in 10 encourage their children to save some of their pocket money – while nine per cent try to encourage their

children to put all the cash away.

WILL THE MONEY IN BANKS AND BUILDING SOCIETIES STILL BE PROTECTED FOLLOWING THE VOTE TO LEAVE THE EU?

Money held in banks, building societies and credit unions is protected by a UK scheme – the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The FSCS pays money out to customers of financial services firms when those firms go under. It has said its scope and coverage remains unchanged following the vote.

POUNDNOTES

Financial fact: The North/South house price gap in England has widened to a record high of nearly £169,000, according to an index from Nationwide Building Society. The average house price in the North of England – which for the purposes of the report includes the Midlands as well as Yorkshire and Humberside, the North West and the North East – is £155,222. In the South of England – which includes the South West, South East, London and East Anglia – the average price of a home is £324,078.

SCAMS AWARENESS MONTH LAUNCHED

Investment scam victims are losing £20,000 on average to frauds which may involve fake diamonds, bogus stocks and shares and fine wines that do not really exist, Citizens Advice is warning. Analysis of 5,000 scams reported to the charity between January and March 2016 showed how fraudsters are conning savers and investors out of tens of thousands of pounds. Citizens Advice and the Chartered Trading Standards Institute have launched Scams Awareness Month – a national campaign to help people avoid falling prey to scams.



Turner's Black Country depiction



The Turner painting which encapsulates the Black Country and its industrial heritage

THIS striking landscape perfectly captures the industrial heritage of Dudley and sums up why the area became known as the Black Country.

The image by JMW Turner, was shared by the Royal Academy of Arts on Twitter to coincide with Black Country Day.

Looking up from Tipton Canal which is lined with barges, it shows smoke billowing from factories and lime kilns in the 19th century. The modern commercial activity provides a marked contrast with ancient landmarks like Dudley Castle in the background.

Turner visited the area in 1830 and produced this scene in watercolour for his 'Picturesque Views in England and Wales' series.

Real ale festival saved

THE annual Dudley Winter Ales Fair has been saved after new organisers came forward to take charge of its running.

It had been cancelled after the Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale could not find someone to take over as festival organiser.

At an emergency meeting in the Lamp Tavern, Dudley, social secretary Jacqui Edwards was voted in to the post. She will be assisted by Simon Hanson, a member of neighbouring Stourbridge and Halesowen Camra.

The branch had invited members from other West Midlands branches to the meeting in an effort to save the three-day festival, which will now go ahead from November 24-26 in Dudley Town Hall.

Camra's regional director Gary Timmins, who had been prepared to take on the festival organiser post if no one else had come forward, said he was delighted it had been saved.

Branch chairman Eyan Hunt said it would have been very sad to lose the festival, but added all other key roles in the team needed for the festival, including treasurer, had been filled.

Mrs Edwards, of Woodsetton, said more members would still need to get involved.

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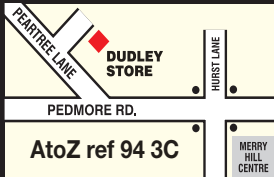


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Secret dens and sandpits will add new dimension

As the summer holidays begin, HANNAH STEPHENSON looks at installing fun play items to encourage your children into the garden, from secret dens to sandpits, and looks at plants to avoid if you have young children.

SO you've bought them the junior gardening gloves, mini-forks and little wheelbarrows to get your kids in the mood for gardening – but when all the planting's done, what's next?

Well, other enticements might include a den, tucked away from the adults, preferably in a shady part of the garden that will not suffer from high use with little ones coming in and out all the time.

To do it quickly, establish some shelter and fast-growing cover using plants such as willows. For an improvised hideaway, create a simple teepee from willow canes pushed in the ground in a circle and tied together at the top. If you want something prettier for next year, plant climbers such as clematis to climb up the canes in spring to provide flower cover.



A treehouse may be the ultimate den, but it can be costly and complicated to erect if you're not a natural DIY-er, so you may be better off letting kids make their own den.

Leave a wild area for them to roam around in, preferably towards the back of the garden, but where you can keep an eye on them, providing a variety of twiggy sticks, plants and wood and let their imagination run wild. They can make their own camps using old curtains, old sheets, blankets and pegs.

Sandpits provide young children with hours of fun, whether you buy a plastic one with a lid on it or a more permanent fixture made from a circle of logs set vertically into the ground or from a cleaned-up tractor or lorry tyre.

Use sand that is sold specifically for playpits, as it is non-toxic and won't harm children, animals, lawns or borders if accidentally spilt. Public play areas and sandpits with high use tend to replace the sand annually, but it is not always necessary to do this if you keep the pit covered when not in use.

It's worth drying it out regularly, though, as bacteria and other bugs can breed in sand that is continually wet.



Create a wildlife garden for kids. Planting should ideally be done in the spring when you can sow a wildflower meadow and feature a good variety of plants including shrubs, hedges and trees as well as winter berries. Create a bed featuring wildflowers which will grow on poor soils, including meadow clary (Salvia pratensis) and red campion (Silene dioica) along with nectar-rich open-centred flowers including poppies, cat-

mint, sedums and herbs such as lavender, mint and thyme.

Help the kids make an insect house using old pieces of bamboo cane inserted into a small wooden frame or terracotta pot, and put out bird feeders and baths, nesting boxes and hedgehog and insect houses in this new wildlife space while the kids make a log pile in which insects and mammals can shelter. Treat them to a wildlife identification guide, so they can tell you what they've seen and a pair of binoculars for a better view.

As play is likely to be at the top of a young family's agenda, play equipment such as swings and slides could be situated in their own area or integrated into the garden.

If you are creating an area for the children, there are many plants to avoid because they are either poisonous or irritate the skin. For a comprehensive list, visit www.rhs.org.uk

BEST OF THE BUNCH - Escallonia

THIS compact, dense, evergreen shrub from South America is thickly clothed in aromatic, small, highly polished deep green leaves, topped by clusters of pinkish-white flowers in summer.

It's perfect for coastal gardens or as an addition to cottage and Mediterranean gardens and is a popular choice for a hedge or windbreak. E. 'Apple Blossom' is among the favourites, growing to 2.5m high and wide in a sunny spot in sheltered or exposed position. Once established it has excellent drought tolerance and requires minimum pruning. If it grows leggy, cut it back hard in spring which will promote growth.



You'll know when melons are ready because of their sweet smell

Sensitive fruits are worth putting in the extra effort

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Melons

MELONS like to be warm and well-watered so do better in greenhouses here as they're extremely sensitive to cold and wet.

Sow seeds individually in 8cm pots in a heated propagator at 16-18C or on a warm windowsill indoors in April, pot on as necessary, staking with a cane and tying the plants in with soft twine. Keep the plants at 16C until the weather warms up and in mid to late spring plant them into large pots, soil borders or a grow bag in the greenhouse.

If you're growing them outdoors, move them outside in early summer in a warm, sunny, sheltered spot in well-drained, humus-rich soil and cover them with a cloche or cold frame. You need to pollinate those growing undercover by taking a soft artist's brush and dabbing it into the centre of all the wide open flowers in turn, to transfer pollen from the male flowers to the females.

When fruits are gooseberry size, select the best four on each stem and remove all other flowers, fruit and leaves. If you are growing

melon on a strong trellis, provide some support for the swelling fruit - a string bag or an old pair of tights supported from above will work. If you're letting the plant sprawl on the ground, place a tile or a piece of glass under each fruit to prevent rotting. You'll know when they are ready because of their sweet smell.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

1. Save a few new potatoes to plant for a fresh crop at Christmas.
2. Check over large-flowered varieties of dahlia and pinch out any weak shoots.
3. Take cuttings of rock plants such as aubrieta, thyme, phlox and dianthus.
4. Buy freesia bulbs and pot them in succession through August.
5. Lift garlic bulbs, bunch loosely and hang in an airy place to dry.
6. Mow the lawn regularly, raising the height of the cutting blades in very dry weather.
7. Give roses a final feed of the year.
8. Gather aromatic leaves and flowers to dry for pot pourri.

Foliage: the framework of our floral daydreams

ROSS UNDERWOOD

Head Gardener at Hodnet Hall



FOR the romantic minded gardener, orchestrating a concert of summer flowers in harmonious pastel shades or a riotous contrast of fiery hues is the stuff that dreams are made of.

Yet when we pick our way between rows of tempting offerings at the garden centre how many of us stop to consider foliage in our daydreams?

The colour and shape of foliage is already setting the character and developing the background and framework of the garden. In many ways leaves are more important for the architecture of the garden than flowers. Hedges not only divide us from our neighbours but they are the canvas on which we as gardeners shape the mood of the garden. In larger gardens they subdivide the spaces within so that different areas can be manipulated according to our whim and fancy. Trees give focal points and link the garden to the surrounding countryside and a well placed evergreen can hold our interest even in the depths of winter. Let us also not forget the all important lawn. The sward can counterbalance the busiest border providing welcome rest for the eye and senses.

But within our borders we need a framework of foliage that will provide some weight and solidity and set off the flowers.

Garden fashions come and go but the importance of foliage and flowers working together was best demonstrated by the late Christopher Lloyd at his garden, Great Dixter and in his book 'The Mixed Border'.

For a statement plant with purple foliage there can be no better choice than Acer 'Bloodgood' which has the darkest purple black foliage of all the acers. It needs to be kept out of the hottest sun and most drying winds or the leaves will crinkle.

Cotinus coggygria 'Royal Purple' and Cotinus 'Grace' are never sombre and are two of my favourite purple leaved shrubs, which issue clouds of flowers that give a smoky effect. These flowers, like the rest of us grey with age but with the sun behind them they have few rivals. Charming combinations can be achieved by letting a contrasting clematis scramble through the branches.

Purple foliage can be used to great advantage on walls and other structures and the best for this job is Vitis vinifera 'Purpurea' with typical vine shaped leaves which turn a bloomy purple. Once again why not choose a companion such as a rose, to get hauled aloft with the vine.

Silver leaved plants have always proven popular especially with Mediterranean style planting schemes. Indeed there was once a lady, Mrs Desmond Underwood, who grew nothing but at her nursery. Her book, 'Grey and Silver Plants' has sadly been long out of print but it is worth getting hold of if you can find it.



Lavender is among the popular silver foliage plants and requires sharp drainage in order to flourish



The giant artichoke, Cynara cardunculus, has the largest leaves

One of the best statement plants is the silver leaves weeping pear, Pyrus salicifolia 'Pendula' which if not over pruned billows like a sail caught by the wind. Under planted with bright bulbs such as the autumn crocus or colchicums it is a fine sight.

The giant artichoke, Cynara cardunculus has the largest leaves of all the silver foliage plants in the garden. In Victorian times the stems were balanced and eaten.

Many herbs such as a lavender have a silver colour to the foliage as does the catmint, Nepeta. Many silver foliage plants have evolved to survived an arid climate and

so require sharp drainage. Silver foliage is wonderful in the evening as are white flowers especially against the deep greens of shrubs or the blackest evening shade. In full sun the impact on the eye can be diluted.

Gold however presents itself differently, it offers a warmth reminiscent of sunshine.

Generally golden leaves plants dislike full sun so it is usually purple foliage that sets off hot colours. True gold can be hard to find and many of the best foliage plants have a touch of green. For my money Caltaipa bignonioides 'Aurea' is amongst the



Gold is useful in shade, especially on the ground

best golden leaves plant for making a statement. Its new growth is purple but by the time the leaves reach their full size they are bright gold. It is not as vigorous as its purple relative but can be pruned in spring to keep it a shrub rather than a tree.

Gold is useful in shade especially on the ground where it can be as effective as a patch of true sunlight. I hope this has given you a taste for what can be explored as far as foliage colour is concerned.

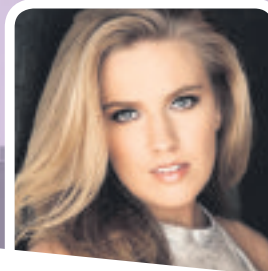
The real excitement is in planning and implementing colour combinations in your own garden.

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Career blooms

Blossoms hit big time
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**Sara Best in
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Contemporary Craft Markets
Sun at 11am, Free
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Summer Holiday Family Fun
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Tonight at 6.30pm - 9pm,
Tomorrow at 9.30am - 2pm,
Tue at 9.30am - 4pm, 6.30pm - 9pm,
Festival Drayton Centre,
Market Drayton, TF9 3AX.
Call 01630 654444

Kan Xuan
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

Jesse Bruton
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

All The World's A Stage
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Inspire 16: The Young Creatives Of Birmingham
Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

A Big Bang: The Origins Of The Pop Art Collection Part 2
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, WV1 1DU.
Call 01902 552055

Tales Of The City
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Craft Goes Pop
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, WV1 1DU.
Call 01902 552055

The Lanchester Grand Circus
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Bantock House, Wolverhampton, WV3 9LQ.
Call 01902 552195

Wildlife Photographer Of The Year 2016
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, WV1 1DU.
Call 01902 552055

Curious Beauty
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Turning To See: From Van Dyck To Lucian Freud
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

Birmingham People And Change In The Inner-City
Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

MUSEUMS & ATTRACTIONS

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Call 01384 817817

Blakesley Hall
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Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RN.
Call 0121 464 2193

Stafford Castle
Tomorrow at 11am - 4pm, Sun at 11am - 4pm, Wed at 11am - 4pm, Free
Stafford, ST16 1DJ.
Call 01785 257698

The Falconry Centre
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, £3.50 - £12.50
Hagley, DY9 0JB.
Call 01562 700014

The Old Guildhall Prison Cells
Tomorrow at 10am - 4pm,
Guildhall, Lichfield, WS13 6LU.
Call 01543 262223

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Headline tour as band Blossoms



Stockport's five-piece indie band Blossoms appear in Birmingham as part of their headline autumn tour

INDIE band Blossoms have announced a headline UK tour this autumn – with a date in Birmingham on September 23.

The tour announcement comes as the Stockport quintet's self-titled debut album is released tomorrow (Friday).

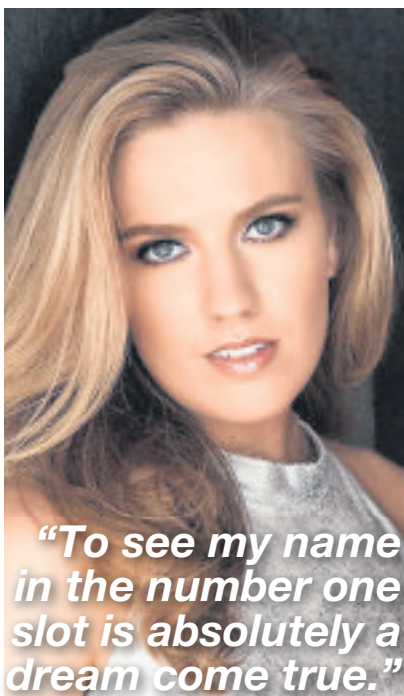
Formed in 2013, Blossoms, fronted

by Tom Ogden, also feature Charlie Salt (bass, backing vocals), Josh Dewhurst (lead guitar), Joe Donovan (drums) and Myles Kellock (keyboards) and were among the new acts featured in the BBC's Sound Of new music list for 2016.

Singles released so far include Charlemagne, At Most A Kiss and

Getaway. Blossoms also feature heavily on the festival scene this year, having already appeared at Glastonbury and T in the Park, with dates at Reading and Leeds still to come.

Blossoms appear at the O2 Institute on Friday, September 23, with tickets on sale from August 29. Support comes from Declan McKenna.



"To see my name in the number one slot is absolutely a dream come true."

It's now Full Speed Ahead for SaraBeth

THE familiar saying 'Everything is bigger in Texas' comes to mind when describing powerhouse Country vocalist Sarah Elizabeth Swagers – aka SaraBeth – a native of the 'Lone Star State'.

The contemporary country singer/songwriter is making her mark in Nashville and is gaining a huge fanbase thanks to her spirited vocals and energetic live performances.

Audiences in Wolverhampton can see what all the fuss is about next week as she performs with Glenn Mitchell at the Robin 2 in Mount Pleasant, Bilston, on Tuesday, August 9, from 8pm. It is her third consecutive year of visiting the UK and she will headline a 13 city tour.

SaraBeth's current project, the EP Full Speed Ahead was released this month and debuted at number one on iTunes. It features a stellar version of the Backstreet Boys' I Want It That Way. SaraBeth said: "I don't even know what emotions I was feeling but to see my name in the number one slot is absolutely a dream come true."

Meanwhile few British people have enjoyed country music success in the way that Glenn Mitchell has.

Since moving there in 2001, he has toured with many of Nashville's finest musicians and has collected a clutch of achievements, notably best album, best song and the most nominations for the UK Country Radio Awards and has had three number one singles on the ECMA Country chart.

Tickets for the Bilston concert are £10 or £12 on the door. Call 01902 401211.

Comedy vehicle for sharing faith

FUNNYMAN Bobby Ball will let fans in on his Christian faith next month.

Ball, better known for his Cannon & Ball partnership with Tommy Cannon, turned Christian in 1986 at the height of his professional career.

Since 1995, Ball has been using his comedic talents to share his faith at events and churches around the country.

On Saturday, September 10, he will be at Dudley Town Hall, with tickets at £10 for a 7.30pm event.

Call the box office on 01384 812812 to book, (fees apply) or visit www.dudley.gov.uk/entertainment

City gig follows launch of album

SONGWRITER/GUITARIST Charlie Parr performs in Birmingham next week – coinciding with the release of his new album.

Parr has joined the roster of Red House Records for his latest studio album Stumpjumper, which is being released tomorrow (Friday).

As part of his current UK headline tour, he performs at the Kitchen Garden Cafe, in Kings Heath, next Tuesday, August 9.

Tickets are £12 for an 8pm start, available from the cafe or at www.wegotickets.com

For more on Charlie Parr, go to <http://www.charlieparr.com>

Summer lovin' for stage performers

TALENTED performers are hoping to get the 'You're The One That I Want' call from the theatre bosses ahead of this year's Stage Experience at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre.

The production of Grease features gifted performers hungry for a taste of life in professional musical theatre. More than 100 youngsters will work on the production for two weeks before the curtain goes up from August 17-20. Showtimes are 7.30pm each night, with a 2.30pm final day matinee. Ticket prices range from £15 to £22.

Visit <http://www.atgtickets.com/shows/grease/new-alexandra-theatre-birmingham/>

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CHOICE



Jeremy Paxman
The Mystery of Van Gogh's Ear (BBC2, 9pm)

Jeremy Paxman joins forces with 'art sleuth' Bernadette Murphy in a bid to solve one of the greatest and bloodiest mysteries of the art world – why did Vincent Van Gogh take a blade to his own ear in December, 1888? The pair set out to discover why the Dutch post-impressionist chose to mutilate himself, and also to identify the unknown girl to whom he is reported to have given is severed ear. Their quest takes them from Vincent's former home in the south of France to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, and along the way, they seek to determine the causes of the painter's mental turmoil. The answers they are looking for, however, might not lie in Europe.

BBC1

6.00 Olympic Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Home Cooking Made Easy. (R) **12.00** BBC News. Weather. **12.10** Olympics 2016. Hazel Irvine introduces the opening live coverage of the Olympic Games from Rio, featuring rowing heats, the men's cycling road race and swimming heats.
6.00 BBC News.
6.10 Regional Programme.
6.20 Olympics 2016. Day one in Rio continues with the conclusion of the men's cycling road race, the women's rugby sevens pool matches and the beach volleyball preliminaries. Fort Copacabana is the setting for the cycling road race, with the British riders hoping to be more successful than in the London Games four years ago. On that occasion, Mark Cavendish started as the favourite as part of a star-studded Team GB, but the rest of the field did everything possible to stop the flying Manxman from winning, with gold eventually being won by Alexander Vinokourov of Kazakhstan. The preliminary fixtures continue at the Beach Volleyball Arena in the men's and women's disciplines, and the women's rugby sevens pool matches take place during the evening at the Deodoro Stadium, while the women's -48kg and men's -60kg judo medals are decided from 21.00 at Carioca Arena 2. The battle to win the first of the archery medals concludes at the Sambodromo at 21.07, featuring the bronze-medal encounter and the final of the men's team event, with South Korea expected to be among the nations involved in the latter stages. Plus, highlights of the men's artistic gymnastics qualifiers at the Rio Olympic Arena and the first-round matches at the Olympic Tennis Centre.
10.10 BBC News. Weather.
10.30 Olympics 2016. Clare Balding and Mark Chapman introduce live coverage from the opening day in Rio, featuring the men's artistic gymnastics qualifiers at the Rio Olympic Arena and the first-round matches at the Olympic Tennis Centre.
1.00 Olympics 2016. Jason Mohammad introduces the final live coverage of the opening day in Rio, featuring the first four swimming finals and Great Britain v Australia in the women's hockey. National Lottery Update. **4.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **4.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 The Women's Football Show. (R) **6.30** Film: The Silver Darlings. (1947) **7.55** Film: The Happiest Days of Your Life. (1950) **9.15** Olympics 2016. Another chance to see the opening ceremony of the Games of the XXII Olympiad. (R) **12.00** The Hairy Bikers' Northern Exposure. (R) **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.45** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.30** Flog It! (R) **4.20** Full Steam Ahead. (R) **5.20** Highlands: Scotland's Wild Heart. (R)
6.20 Gardeners' World. On the 20th anniversary of the death of Geoff Hamilton, Adam Frost returns to Barnsdale to pay tribute to the programme's former presenter. Plus, tips on growing sweet peas. (R)
6.50 Proms Extra. Katie Derham turns attention to Mahler's Third Symphony and the David Bowie Prom, as well as Berlioz's choral symphony, Romeo and Juliet.
7.30 Full Steam Ahead. Historians Ruth Goddard, Alex Langlands and Peter Ginn relive the golden age of steam as they explore how the Victorian railways created modern Britain. (R)
8.30 Dad's Army. The platoon takes part in an exercise with the regular army and everything goes well – until Mainwaring assumes the role of an enemy agent on the run. (R)
9.00 The Mystery of Van Gogh's Ear. Jeremy Paxman and Bernadette Murphy investigate why Vincent Van Gogh took a blade to his own ear in 1888, traveling across France, the Netherlands and California seeking answers.
10.00 The National Lottery Live. The all-important numbers.
10.10 Olympics 2016. Further coverage from the opening day in Rio.
10.30 QI XL. Extended edition. Ross Noble, Keith Lette, Sue Perkins and Alan Davies attempt to answer host Stephen Fry's range of fiendish questions on the topic of ladies and gents. (R)
11.15 Versailles. The traitor strikes in the palace prison, while Henriette has a rocky reunion with her brother, Charles II of England. Elsewhere, Beatrice risks a rendezvous with Marshal; (R) Inside Versailles.
12.15 Film: About Elly. (2009) **2.10** Film: Dracula. (1958) **3.30** This is BBC Two. **5.45** Gardeners' World. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITY: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.00** Ninjago: Rise of the Snakes. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** Film: Columbo: Etude in Black. (1972) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk and John Cassavetes. **1.20** ITV News. Weather. **1.35** Wild Animal Reunions. (R) **2.35** Doc Martin. (R) **3.40** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **4.40** Film: The Scorpion King. (2002) Fantasy action adventure, starring Dwayne Johnson.
6.15 Regional Programme. Weather.
6.30 ITV News. Weather.
6.45 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring a toddler destroying Stonehenge, a dubstep-loving seagull, the world's first heavy-petting zoo, and babysitting tips from a cross-dressing dad.
7.15 Catchphrase. Mandy Lillie, Matthew Newman and Nimisha Odgedra set out to prove they can "see it and say it" as Stephen Mulhern challenges them to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000.
8.00 Film: Skyfall. (2012) James Bond pursues a mysterious criminal mastermind who has orchestrated a terrorist attack on MI6 headquarters and exposed the identities of undercover agents around the world. The trail leads to a rogue former operative who has a personal vendetta against the intelligence organisation's leader. Action thriller, starring Daniel Craig and Ralph Fiennes.
10.45 ITV News. Weather.
11.00 Film: Carry On Girls. (1973) A local council plans to hold a beauty contest to attract tourists, but an outraged feminist group is plotting to sabotage the event. Comedy, starring Sid James.
12.45 Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
3.00 Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Shipping Wars. (R) **6.40** Gillette World Sport. **7.10** Cardiff Triathlon. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.05** The Simpsons. (R) **11.35** The Simpsons. (R) **12.05** Film: City of Ember. (2008) Fantasy adventure, starring Saoirse Ronan. **2.00** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ascot, Wykebeck Park and Newmarket. **4.30** Come Dine with Me. **5.00** Come Dine with Me. **5.30** Come Dine with Me. The final night of the competition in the Lytham St Annes and Southport area arrives, and no-nonsense Russian Tanya is the final host. However, a disastrous Russian-speaking lesson, a bad experience with caviar, and explosive vegetables look set to derail the evening.
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Film: Men in Black. (1997) A streetwise cop is enlisted by a top-secret government force dedicated to policing alien visitors to Earth, teaming up with a veteran agent just as a body-swapping extraterrestrial giant insect begins a reign of terror throughout New York City. Sci-fi comedy, starring Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones, Linda Fiorentino, Rip Torn and Vincent D'Onofrio.
9.00 Film: Super 8. (2011) Premiere. A boy and his friends sneak out at night to film an amateur zombie movie, only to witness a train derailment. As people start disappearing from their town and the military descends in force, they come to realise a dangerous alien was being transported on the train and is now on the loose. Sci-fi thriller, starring Joel Courtney and Elle Fanning.
11.15 Film: Trance. (2013) A hypnotist helps an amnesiac art dealer remember where he hid a painting stolen from his own auction house. Crime thriller, starring James McAvoy and Rosario Dawson.
1.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.05** Hollywood. Omnibus. The police arrest Mac. (R) **4.10** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **4.25** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.20** Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.25** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **8.50** The Saturday Show Live. **11.00** Funniest Falls, Falls & Flops. **11.30** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **12.25** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **1.20** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **2.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **4.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Agents Paul and Phil head to Kent for an eviction and discover a full-scale cannabis factory upstairs. Plus, Brian and Delroy chase a debt of nearly £3,000 in Hampshire. (R)
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Pakistan. Mark Nicholas presents action from day four of the Third Test in the four-match series, which took place at Edgbaston. With commentary and analysis from Geoffrey Boycott, Michael Vaughan and Simon Hughes.
8.00 NCIS. Gibbs and the team investigate the death of a Navy lieutenant commander's husband, while Tony's father visits for Christmas. Guest starring Robert Wagner. (R)
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. New series. George Riley and Lynsey Higgrave introduce a full-scale highlights from the opening weekend's games in the Championship, including Fulham v Newcastle United from Friday night.
10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. New series. George Riley and Lynsey Higgrave introduce all the goals from the opening weekend's games in the Leagues One and Two.
10.30 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the famous housemates' past 24 hours from the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they try to get used to living alongside one another.
11.35 Impractical Jokers UK. Four friends compete in a series of challenges, and in the first task have to add as many scoops of pepper as they can to other diners' plates. (R)
12.05 SuperCasino. **3.10** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **4.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **5.05** Divine Designs. (R) **5.15** Nick's Quest. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
1.00 Olympics 2016 **2.00** Britain on Film: A Woman's Place **2.30** Danny Baker Rocks the Nineties (A Bit) **3.00** New York Rock at the BBC **4.00** Close
ITV2
11.30 Ninja Warrior UK **12.30** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.05** Film: Must Love Dogs (2006) **2.05** FYI Daily **2.10** Film: Must Love Dogs (2006) **3.00** Film: Stormbreaker (2006) **4.00** FYI Daily **4.05** Film: Stormbreaker (2006) **4.55** Film: Yogi Bear (2010) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** Film: Yogi Bear (2010) **6.35** Film: Twilight (2008) **7.35** FYI Daily **7.40** Film: Twilight (2008) **8.00** Film: Hot Fuzz (2007) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** Film: Hot Fuzz (2007) **11.25** Family Guy **12.55** American Dad! **1.50** The Cleveland Show **2.45** Ashley Roberts: The Hot Desk **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.45 Agatha Christie's Marple **2.50** Film: The Pure Hell of St Trinian's (1960) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55** Film: The Pure Hell of St Trinian's (1960) **4.55** Midsomer Murders **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Lewis **10.00** A Touch of Frost **11.10** Inspector Morse **2.15** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
11.30 Film: The Land That Time Forgot (1975) **12.35** Film: The Land That Time Forgot (1975) **1.20** Film: Nevada Smith (1966) **2.25** FYI Daily **2.30** Film: Nevada Smith (1966) **4.00** British Touring Car Championship Highlights **5.30** Storage Wars **6.00** The Motorbike Show **7.00** TT Blues **8.00** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **9.05** FYI Daily **9.10** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **10.40** Film: Ransom (1996) **11.50** FYI Daily **11.55** Film: Ransom (1996) **1.05** Minder **2.05** Andy Cole: Sports Life Stories **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.30 Rich Kids of Instagram **12.30** New Girl **1.00** The Goldbergs **3.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.00** Film: The Golden Compass (2007) **6.10** Rudelish! Tube Shorts **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Five-Year Engagement (2012) **11.30** Gogglebox **1.40** First Dates **2.40** Rude Tube **3.35** Charmed **4.15** How I Met Your Mother **4.55** Revenge
Film4
1.00 The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **3.15** Stuart Little (1999) **4.55** Cheaper by the Dozen (2003) **6.50** Mission: Impossible (1996) **9.00** The Transporter (2002) **10.45** Die Hard (1988) **1.20** 13 Assassins (2010) **3.50** Close

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FILM CHOICES

WEDNESDAY

The Reckoning, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Having left behind the Amish life of her youth for the modern world, a woman must now come to terms with her heritage and the man she once loved. Romantic drama, starring Katie Leclerc, Chad Connell and Jacob Blair. (2015)

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark, Channel 4, 12.35am

A girl moves into a gothic mansion with her father and his new girlfriend, and hears strange noises coming from the basement. Her curiosity leads her to unwittingly unleash a swarm of voracious tiny monsters, but her attempts to warn her family of the terrible danger they are in fall on deaf ears. Horror, with Bailee Madison, Guy Pearce and Katie Holmes. (2010)

THURSDAY

Guilty Until Proven Innocent: Garage Sale Mystery, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Antiques expert – and amateur detective Jennifer Shannon puts her sleuthing skills to the test once more when an old friend from college becomes the prime suspect in a murder investigation. Crime drama, starring Lori Loughlin, Lindsay Maxwell. (2016)



A Fish Called Wanda, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

FRIDAY

A Fish Called Wanda, ITV, 10.40pm

A stuffy English barrister representing a jewel thief is targeted by his client's partners in crime – a seductive American crook and her dim-witted would-be philosopher lover who will go to any lengths to discover where the diamonds from their last heist have been hidden. Crime comedy, starring John Cleese, Jamie Lee Curtis, Kevin Kline, Michael Palin and Tom Georgeson. (1988)

Flying Blind, BBC2, 11.10pm

An aerospace engineer designing military drones begins a passionate affair with a younger Muslim student. The relationship leads to her being questioned by the security services, who claim he is involved in terrorism, forcing her to question how much she knows about her lover and where her loyalties lie. Drama, starring Helen McCrory, Najib Oudghiri, Kenneth Cranham, Tristan Gemmill, Lorcan Cranitch and Razane Jammal. (2012)

Tears all round as they meet the parents

Hankies at the ready everyone – there are two more unbearably moving tales heading your way this week.

The first of them focuses on David Smith, who lives in Cambridgeshire with his wife and two children. He's close to his offspring, and says, "I don't think you understand the love of a father until you become a father yourself."

David was raised by his mother and her husband alongside two siblings. However, he didn't bond with the man he thought was his dad, and discovered in his teens, following his mother's divorce, that his biological father was a man called Ken Davis, whom she'd met and fallen in love with. However, following a heated argument, they went their separate ways.

For years, David has longed for a father figure: "I want someone to be proud of me, someone to say, 'this is my son'."

The programme's researchers stepped in to lend him a hand. They discovered that Ken is now married

with three more children and living in West Bromwich.

When co-host Nicky Campbell catches up with him, Ken reveals he's always been aware of David's existence and had wanted to be a part of his life, but felt that when his mother married, that he'd be better off as part of their family unit; he's devastated to find that David's childhood wasn't a happy one and regrets his decision.

After seeing a picture of him, Ken agrees to meet his son for the first time – and it's a life-changing moment for both of them that won't leave a dry eye anywhere.

The second story is perhaps even more remarkable. It focuses on Mandy Hearn, who was adopted as a baby and grew up by loving parents. However, she claims she always felt different so, 30 years ago, when she was 18, she decided to investigate in an attempt to understand why her birth mother had given her up – and what she found out shocked her.

Mandy is the offspring of Pamela, who had her when she was just 13 years of age. "She was a child herself,"

remarks Mandy, who was deeply affected by this revelation. "It's shocking when you see how young she was. She must have been terrified."

Initially, she called off her search, concerned that if Pamela had gone on to have another family, it might be too upsetting for both them and her to disturb their happiness. But now, she feels the need to get to know her better.

Campbell visits Pamela at her home in Co Mayo on Ireland's west coast. She reveals that at the time of her pregnancy, she had little support and despite feeling a bond with her daughter, felt she had no choice but to give her up. "I was doing someone a good turn, making family for other people," she explains.

Davina McCall accompanies the women when they come face-to-face in Richmond, not far from where they were last together almost 50 years ago.

"It is a great feeling to know that she's well and she knows that I am okay," says Mandy."



Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell present Long Lost Family, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Brief Encounters

ITV, 9pm

Steph organises an exotic lingerie event at a local nightclub, but things are unlikely to run smoothly. Brian is stunned when Dawn tells him she has asked Russell to model, Steph confronts Pauline and asks why she lied to Johnny, while Barry shows Terry he knows the truth about him and Lisa. On the evening of the show, Pauline approaches Nita and gives her shocking news that leaves all the women astounded. Drama, starring Penelope Wilton and Sophie Rundle. Last in the series.

Naked Attraction

Channel 4, 10pm

If you've missed the first two episodes of this controversial series, it's the show that literally strips the dating process bare. Each week, two singletons get the chance to choose a date from six naked candidates, who are revealed to them one body part at a time. The decisions are made based on pure physical attraction, but will that prove to be a better indicator of compatibility than making small talk in a pub or exchanging text messages? The latest people to put it to the test are Matthew, a 24-year-old mobile sales advisor, and Tracy, who has been out of the dating game for three years.

TUESDAY

First Dates

Channel 4, 10pm

New series. Podiatrist Felicity meets handsome city boy Jethro, who describes himself as 'marmite', while 24-year-old Irishman Damian believes his Tourette's is the reason he has yet to find the man of his dreams. He goes on a date with part-time model Kai, who is a sucker for an Irish accent. Meanwhile, 79-year-old history student Joe has a poignant and cheeky date with Dee, boat builder Abbey swaps her overalls for a dress in a bid to win the heart of special effects technicians James, and accountant Ajai meets his date Hema.

WEDNESDAY

Inside CERN: A Horizon Special BBC2, 8pm

The BBC's flagship science programme turns its attention to one of the most extraordinary stories in particle physics. It begins in June 2015, when teams at CERN started running the Large Hadron Collider at the highest energy possible. Before long, rumours began to emerge that they were on the brink of a huge discovery, thanks to a mysterious bump in some data suggesting a first glimpse of a brand new

particle. If you're not sure why that's so exciting, it could change our understanding of the universe and also hints at extra dimensions – but there is a possibility that the data bump was caused by noise from the machine. Horizon follows the scientists as they look for the signals that would determine one way or the other whether there really is a new particle.

THURSDAY

The Supervet: Bionic Specials

Channel 4, 8pm

New series. The return of the documentary about a pioneering veterinary practice, delving deeper into the science behind the cutting-edge procedures used by Professor Noel Fitzpatrick and his staff. Noel tries to cure a terrier's limp by performing an elbow replacement – using a 3D-printed hinged joint.



Brief Encounters, Monday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY

Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year Channel 4, 8pm

The 2016 competition arrives at its half-way point, with the turn of the most popular category - Pubs and Entertainment sheds. This fiercely contested group includes an entire Wild West town built out of sheds up in Aberdeen, a faithful replica of a Polish mountain drinking den in rural Ireland, and a nightclub in a Hackney with a truly one-of-a-kind owner. Meanwhile, among the shortlisted sheds in the Workshops and Studios group are a blacksmith's smithy and Star Wars shed.

Friday Night Dinner

Channel 4, 10pm

Unlike most episodes of this laugh-out-loud comedy, Adam (Simon Bird) doesn't just turn up at mum and dad's for dinner tonight – he's already there. The Goodman son has been staying at his parents' place all week, and with Mum (Tamsin Greig) fussing over him so much, he's regressed into behaving like a child – well, even more than usual. But one staple of this comedy is that the family quartet won't actually get the chance to enjoy their dinner, as something or someone is bound to turn up to sabotage it. This week it is neighbour Jim (Mark Heap), who is terrified of his own dog.

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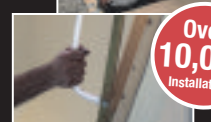
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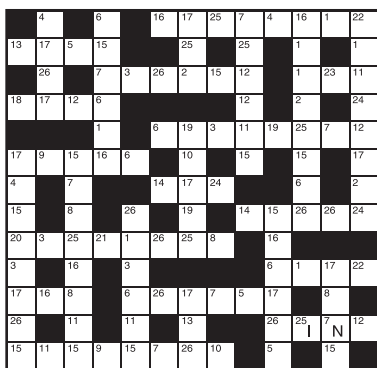
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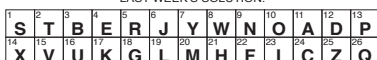
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

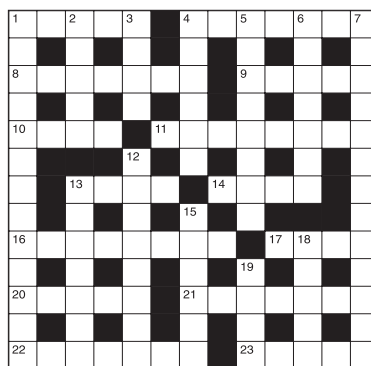
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Shipping trade (5)
- Take a trip (7)
- Where to see women in retreat (7)
- Finishing off a cake? (5)
- Birds slow to change (4)
- He could be grounded and in trouble (8)
- Assemble in the mother ship (4)
- Part of a business house reserved for the employer (4)
- Dismissed just for being unqualified (8)
- Form of transport levy that's imposed on one (4)
- Country taking in reciprocal aid (5)
- Eggs turn into cheers (7)
- Objectives a sailor acquires (7)
- Support for the board (5)

Down

- Twister making an honest living (13)
- Abolish article from a year-book (5)
- A row in the amphitheatre (4)
- Uttering an adage (6)
- All that is sure, perhaps, about a tangled vine (8)
- He may put up a house for sale (7)
- Continuous bleep or a ring, perhaps (7,6)
- Reckon I'm splitting the estate (8)
- He produces his pass when he's being charged (7)
- Photographs new plants (6)
- Make staid entrances (5)
- We hold a note for payment (4)



Quick Clues:

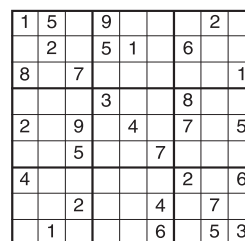
Across

- Criminal (5)
- Send away (7)
- Uproar (7)
- Ape (5)
- Eager (4)
- Repeat (8)
- Melody (4)
- Faithful (4)
- Praiseworthy (8)
- Labyrinth (4)
- Moribund (5)
- Raise (7)
- Farthest (7)
- Clothe (5)

Down

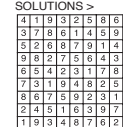
- Prescience (13)
- Profit (5)
- Artless (4)
- Moved to music (6)
- Congruity (8)
- Duck (7)
- Reticence (13)
- Interweave (8)
- Sightseer (7)
- Adduce (6)
- Vigilant (5)
- Repair (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >



LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 3 Impostors; 8 Term; 9 Comes into; 10 Number; 11 Named; 14 Paste; 15 Damp; 16 Sight; 18 Punt; 20 Angle; 21 Gross; 24 Snow; 25 Manifesto; 26 Dual; 27 Programme. Down: 1 Stand-pipe; 2 Promising; 4 Moor; 5 Omega; 6 Tailed; 7 Rate; 9 Ceres; 11 Negus; 12 Dangerous; 13 Speedwell; 17 Taboo; 19 Trying; 22 Senna; 23 Pair; 24 Stem. QUICK - Across: 3 Qualified; 8 Nail; 9 Castigate; 10 Occurs; 11 Fears; 14 Reels; 15 Echo; 16 Smash; 18 Chic; 20 Apple; 21 Table; 24 Strict; 25 Nonentity; 26 Hall; 27 Persisted. Down: 1 Incorrect; 2 Discredit; 4 Upas; 5 Lith; 6 Figure; 7 East; 9 Cross; 11 Flame; 12 Sceptical; 13 Forestall; 17 Hasty; 19 Caress; 22 Lotus; 23 Core; 24 Style.

Thinking space

Quiz

- Which Native American woman is said to have saved the life of Captain John Smith?
- What type of animal is an ibex?
- Which are the only two planets in our solar system not to have moons?
- Which British film-maker directed the film This Sporting Life?
- Which element has the symbol P?
- Within which group of islands is Scapa Flow?
- Whose sidekick was Violet Elizabeth Bott?
- To whom is the Greek epic poem The Odyssey attributed?
- In which country is the Seikan Tunnel, the world's largest underwater tunnel?
- For which party was Emmeline Pankhurst a prospective parliamentary candidate?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Mormons; 2 Robert Thomson; 3 Cuckoo; 4 Ricky Ponting; 5 Urticaria; 6 Kiev; 7 Aster; 8 French; 9 Polecat; 10 Orange.

Niner: EMULATING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 23718 gives a girl's name,
94926 gives a second girl's name,
258372 gives a third girl's name.



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Light bite – the brisket summer rolls



Keep it clean – selection of green teas



Pho-nomenal food – the hearty chicken salad was the star of the show



Streets ahead – Pho offers Vietnamese food

Just the ticket! Why this type of food is right up my street

IT wasn't that long ago when a meal at the train station meant a Double Whopper with chips, some onion rings and an unnecessarily large diet Coke.

The choice of seating was either the sole plastic backless chair or the middle of the platform.

But that's now a distant memory, the future is here and it's sensational – welcome to Grand Central Birmingham which opened last September and has been a huge success in both visitor numbers and positive feedback.

Located on the first floor, Grand Central has given the green light to a diverse number of restaurants from French to Japanese. With my wife being half Filipino, we decided to stay in the Far East and dine at Pho. No that's not a spelling error, the

Nathan Judah tucks in

name may be short and slightly odd, but the experience from start to finish was quite simply a delight.

Pho is an open plan Vietnamese restaurant that delivers quick, healthy 'street food' at a very reasonable price. So what is the meaning behind the name? Quite simply it's the star dish that the restaurant serves – a traditional noodle soup.

The menu is clear, well described and extensive. And if you can't read Vietnamese, the English explanation is quoted just below each dish to help out even the most confused customer.

The staff are incredibly attentive and when I eat out I always ask their thoughts on the menu before I make my final decision, just to see if there's any 'must haves'. The first thing I noticed was that every-

one was incredibly passionate about the food. Not just the staff, but the diners either side of us. To start, we ordered one Goi cuon and one brisket summer roll. Forget deep fried, dry and heavy and think light, healthy and delicious.

Plentiful

But the Vietnamese chicken salad (Goi ga) was the star of the show. It was simply a delight from the first mouthful to the last. Suffice to say my wife's trip to the bathroom resulted in her only having two mouthfuls left when she returned.

The shredded white chicken strips were juicy and plentiful and combined meticulously with Asian herbs and peppers before the addition of a chilli ginger dressing that brought out every single flavour of the dish.

I do like to change things up in restaurants, however with Pho, I always pick the

same thing every single time – Pho chin (brisket) with extra brisket.

The huge bowl in which it was served may be slightly intimidating to the novice, but with the oversized wooden spoon that comes with the soup, they avoid that awkward 'Should I be using chopsticks?' question.

With lean meat aplenty and rice noodles flowing, the dish provides the perfect comfort food combination, but at the same time keeping the healthy-eating element at the forefront of the dish.

Suffice to say we could not manage dessert, but there were a variety of different traditional dishes that looked stunning as they came off the pass.

Excellent service, delicious, healthy plentiful food in a relaxed friendly atmosphere, Pho ticks all the boxes – this really is on the right track.



How to nominate

If you know someone who you think deserves to be considered for an award, simply complete the form opposite. For more information on each category visit the website. If you're not sure which one they fit into, don't worry the judges will decide. Nominees should live or work in the Black Country or south Staffordshire, i.e. within the circulation area of the Express & Star.

What happens next?

A panel of judges will decide who goes through to the next round. The finalists, with a write-up about each of them, will appear in the Express & Star and online. Readers can then vote for the person in each category who they think deserves to win by cutting out special tokens printed in the paper which will appear from October 6 until November 5. The winner in each category will be the person with the most votes.

The chosen finalists, along with selected guests, will be invited to an awards event being held at Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club on Thursday, January 19, 2017, when the winners will be announced.

Let's put the spotlight on the unsung heroes in our community – we want you to tell us about them!

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You may also nominate online

Closing date for entries is midnight Sunday, August 21 2016. Proposers must be aged 18 or over. All nominees' contact information must be on the official entry form and signed by the proposer (except online). You should tell your nominee that you are putting their name forward. If the nominee is under 16 years old, this form should be signed by their parent/guardian – if nominating online there will be a tick box to confirm you have informed the parent/guardian. All MNA employees and their immediate families are excluded. Sponsors and their immediate families may not enter their own category. Nominees should be living or working in the Black Country or south Staffordshire. If making more than one nomination, please use separate forms. All proposers and nominees must be prepared to take part in any relevant publicity, including photographic coverage, in print and online. Information (excluding contact details) on the person you are nominating will be used in-paper and online. The winner of each category will receive a special prize and there is no cash alternative. If there is a voting tie in any category, a judging panel will choose the outright winner. The Editor's decision is final.

NOMINATION FORM



Your details

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode _____

Email address: _____

Daytime telephone number: _____

Details of the person you are nominating

Nominee's name: _____

Their address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email address: _____

Their daytime telephone number: _____

What is your connection with this person?

(e.g family, neighbour, helper in a crisis etc)

Tell us a bit more about them, such as their hobbies,

interests etc

Your signature _____

If the person you are nominating is under the age of 16 then signature of their parent/guardian

Their name _____

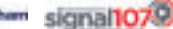
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Please select one of the following categories:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambassador of the Year | <input type="checkbox"/> Angel of the Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Champion(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent(s) of the Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspirational Leader of the Year | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbour of the Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher of the Year | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsung Sporting Hero |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer/Fundraiser of the Year | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Star of the Year |

Tell us in no more than 100 words why you think the person you are nominating deserves to win (alternatively, write your comments on a blank piece of A4 paper)

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Newly refurbished well-presented three-bed home

Situated in a popular area, 2 Parkes Hall Road, Woodsetton, Dudley is newly refurbished and well presented including a new kitchen/diner and bathroom.

It is for sale through Trinity Property at £175,000.

A property that really needs to be viewed in order to be fully appreciated, it has central heating and double glazing, with a front drive way for off road parking.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance porch, leading to an entrance hall with stairs off to the first floor.

There are also doors off to a spacious lounge, a brand new fitted kitchen/diner with a utility room off having access to the side of the property and driveway.

Off the first floor landing are three bedrooms (two doubles and one single) and a brand new fitted bathroom/WC. The new suite includes a P-shaped bath with a shower over. The pleasant rear garden has a gravel and slab patio area and further lawned area. This property is finished to a high standard throughout.

There is also a separate building plot next door for a further detached property with construction beginning presently.

Trinity Property bring a fresh, friendly and honest approach to selling, buying and letting property within the Dudley and Stourbridge area. Offering free market appraisals, great EPC prices, all aspects of property letting and management, they are based in central Dudley and cover Kingswinford, Wordsley, Netherton, Sedgley, Tipton and Tividale and more, with a business built on recommendation.

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HALESOWEN, Hagley Road£1,250 pcm+Fees
A superbly presented detached family home in prime central location close to all amenities and comes part furnished. Featuring: entrance hallway, dining room, delightful lounge, conservatory, large refitted stunning breakfast/kitchen with centre island & integrated appliances, 4 bedrooms, master en-suite, house bathroom, landscaped rear garden, garage & driveway, EPC: B



AMBLECOTE, High Street £775 pcm+Fees
A fantastic opportunity to rent a home on a select development, 'Crystal Gardens'. This home features a spacious lounge/dining area, well appointed kitchen, downstairs WC, the 1st floor has 2 bedrooms & a family bathroom & on the 2nd floor there is a master bedroom with a large en-suite, 2 allocated parking spaces, front & rear gardens. This property will not be available for long. Minimum contract 12 months. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Mendip Road£725 pcm+Fees
A spacious 3 bedroom semi detached home on the Squirrels Estate in Halesowen/Hayley Green, being double glazed and centrally heated throughout. Being located on this popular estate the property would make an ideal family home and has accommodation to comprise a reception hall, lounge, dining kitchen, 3 bedrooms, parking and garage. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Meadowbrook Road£725 pcm+Fees
Large 3 bed mucklow style semi-detached property features: 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 1 single, bathroom with shower, garage (storage only), private rear garden, driveway parking for multiple vehicles, gas central heating and double glazed. Ideally located for Huntingtree and Lutley Primary School. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Wassell Road£675 pcm+Fees
A large unfurnished semi-detached house in central Halesowen which features: entrance porch, lounge, fully fitted kitchen, covered side entrance, private rear garden, 3 good size bedrooms, large bathroom with shower over bath, garage & driveway. Also benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: D



BIRMINGHAM, Watermarque£625 pcm+Fees
Tastefully presented and well proportioned studio apartment set in the prestigious Watermarque development. This newly decorated 4th floor property is fully furnished and comprises: Living room/bedroom with wardrobe space, kitchen with appliances, large bathroom with shower, 24 hour concierge service, 2 lifts, gym, and not far from the NIA, ICC and Symphony hall. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Holt Road £575 pcm+Fees
Minutes away from Rowley Regis Train Station, not far from the M5 J2 and Blackheath Town Centre. A nicely presented refurbished mid terraced home. Featuring 2 double bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, 2 spacious reception rooms, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, downstairs bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, small rear garden, on road parking. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Beaumont Road£575 pcm+Fees
Ideally located in Blackheath for local amenities, train station close by and the M5. This large 2 double bedroom end terraced house features 2 reception rooms with 1 reception having slate flooring and a working wood burner, fitted kitchen, utility room with washing machine, 2 double bedrooms, upstairs bathroom, court yard rear garden, on road parking and off road parking available for 1 car plus garage (accessed from Clifton Road). EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Richmond Street£575 pcm+Fees
A modern style mid terraced in central Halesowen close to all amenities and bus links to Birmingham City Centre. The property comprises fitted kitchen with appliances, hallway, lounge with fireplace, fire, patio doors leading to a small maintenance free garden, 2 double bedrooms and family bathroom with shower. The property has a driveway & also benefits with rear parking. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Bloomfield Street North£575 pcm+Fees
A superbly well presented fully refurbished 2 bedroom terraced property in this very well sought after area having lounge, stunning fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating. Must be viewed to appreciate. NO GARDEN. EPC: C



WORDSLEY, Wordsley Court£550 pcm+Fees
1st floor fully refurbished large apartment within walking distance of Wordsley Green & King George V park. Featuring lovely lounge, 2 generous size double bedrooms, fitted kitchen, shower room, secure parking to rear of property. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Bethesda Gardens£550 pcm+Fees
Located on this new build estate is this modern ground floor apartment, coming unfurnished, briefly comprising of: 2 bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, modern bathroom with shower, fitted kitchen with white goods, open plan spacious lounge, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking. A must view property. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, The Forge £550 pcm+Fees
An extremely well maintained 2 bedroom semi detached property situated towards the head of a quiet cul de sac and within walking distance to Cradley Heath Train Station. Featuring a great living room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, recently installed double glazing, driveway, gas central heating and easy to maintain rear garden. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Hammersley Close£535 pcm+Fees
Located in a nice quiet cul-de-sac on the Homer Hill Estate. Just down the road from Colley Lane Primary School and buses to Halesowen and Cradley Heath. This unfurnished modern terraced house features 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, spacious lounge, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, driveway for 2 cars, rear garden. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Delingpole Walk£525 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished mid mews house, in a well sought after location, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, downstairs WC, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, 2 allocated parking spaces. EPC: B



CRADLEY HEATH, Seedhouse Court£495 pcm+Fees
Set within lovely private gardens. Ideally located for Old Hill train station, local shops and buses for Cradley Heath, Halesowen and Merry Hill, an unfurnished ground floor apartment features 2 double bedrooms, fitted kitchen with white goods, spacious lounge, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, King Street£440 pcm+Fees
Located in the heart of Old Hill. Ideally situated for local shops, buses and train links is this unfurnished 1st floor modern apartment which comprises of 1 double bedroom, fitted kitchen with a small fridge, spacious lounge, double glazing, electric storage heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Great Western Drive£425 pcm+Fees
Unfurnished ground floor flat close to Cradley Heath, Old Hill Train Station and local shops. Featuring in this lovely apartment is gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, double bedroom, shower room, communal garden & allocated parking space. EPC: D



NETHERTON, St Georges Road£395 pcm+Fees
Beautiful refurbishment in a quiet location. This 1st floor apartment features electric storage heating, living room, brand new kitchen, 1 very large double bedroom, modern house bathroom with shower, rear garden, parking space. Viewing recommended to appreciate this nicely proportioned flat. EPC: D



STOURBRIDGE, Bagley Street£425 pcm+Fees
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LYE, High Street £330 pcm+Fees
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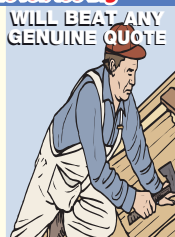
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- 1 Family
- 2 Leisure Time
- 3 Home & Services
- 4 Pets & Animals
- 5 Business & Farming
- 6 Property
- 7 Jobs
- 8 Motoring
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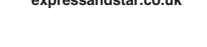
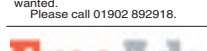
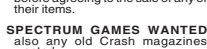
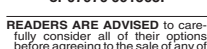
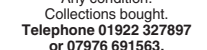
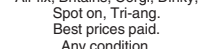
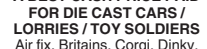
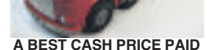
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Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

carpet & upholstery
cleaning

A CLASS CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING
OAP discount. Recession Prices.
Unbeatable Value: Rooms cleaned from £10
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SPECIAL OFFER
10 days of quality fencing.
concrete posts, gravel boards
HEAVY DUTY PANELS SUPPLIED AND FITTED
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
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83 Portway Rd, W'bury

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fully remind advertisers that it is
their responsibility to inform the
publishers of any mistakes or in-
accuracies on the first day of publica-
tion.

roofing

T L Fowkes Roofing & Building Solutions

FREE QUOTATIONS ON REQUEST
call or email
07896 334 946
t.fowkes@yahoo.co.uk

Experts in all roofing and building aspects
including:
• Flat roofing • GPR roofing • Slate and tile roofing
• uPVC and all major building works

MC Roofing Flat roofs, tiling, roof
repairs, fascias and gutters. Call
01902 238999 / 07580 465449.

gardening
services

FREE UP SPACE
GARAGES AND
SHEDS CLEARED
Call: 07956 391885

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per
garden, 25 years experience. Call
01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

gas fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone
carrying out any Gas work
is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas
Safety (Installation and Use)
Regulations 1998 to carry out
gas work in the UK without
being on the Gas Safe Register.

house clearances

A ABSOLUTE BEST CASH PRICE PAID
for house clearances and bereavements.
Shops, Schools and Commercial clearances
Also removals undertaken.
All rubbish removed. Carriers licence held
07852 172641 / 07710 360327

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DECORATOR
ALL domestic work
undertaken
Reliable & Affordable
Special rates for OAPs
No job too SMALL
Call
07957 346 059

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M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING SERVICES. For All Your Home and
Garden Improvements. Over 30
Years Experience. Call Mark or
Sara on 07741 770897.

removals

A MAN WITH A VAN Single items,
flat/house removals/clearances,
local/nationwide. Call Steve 0121
422 2999 or 07815 043724

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your
Removal needs, 07429 453209/
01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

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FROM £20 P/H
MEN WITH VANS FOR REMOVALS.
SINGLE ITEMS, HOUSES, FLATS,
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(FULLY INSURED)
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Home, Office,
Part loads, landlord
clean & repair service.
House clearances.
Quality service guaranteed
lowest rates

Call John - 07802 876 876
office - 01562 640 640

roofing

LABRADOODLE PUPPIES (F1)
mixed litter of black Labrador and
both girls and boys available.
Microchipped, wormed and first
injections will be done and second
injection will be paid for. Mum is a
Labrador and can be seen. Father
is a Standard Poodle. Ready to go
to their loving homes. Please call
07887 563444 for more information
or arrange to view.

LABRADOODLE PUPPIES (F1)
mixed litter of black Labrador and
both girls and boys available.
Microchipped, wormed and first
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is a Standard Poodle. Ready to go
to their loving homes. Please call
07887 563444 for more information
or arrange to view.

BABY FERRETS Hobbs and Gills.
Free to good home.
07909 564590 after 4pm.

KIND HOMES WANTED
"ALFIE"
Two year old Shar Pei, lovely
boy who loves to play
"ROXIE"

Four year old Dog de
Bordeaux, sweet natured girl,
good with children
Call Martin
01384 241034.
www.dogsamaritans.org.uk

KITTENS X3 two girls, one boy, £30
to ensure good home.
07840 345164.

LABRADOODLE PUPPIES (F1)
mixed litter of black Labrador and
both girls and boys available.
Microchipped, wormed and first
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BLITZ SKIPS
AFFORDABLE SKIPS
2-50 YARD SKIPS AVAILABLE
MON-SAT 7AM-6PM
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skip hire

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2-50 YARD SKIPS AVAILABLE
MON-SAT 7AM-6PM
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Classified Ads
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we are really busy!
It definitely
works for us!

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FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL
01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

5

Business & Farming

business
opportunities

READERS are recommended to
take appropriate professional
advice before entering any obli-
gations.

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that
they meet all necessary legal
requirements for owning and
using guns.

guns & dogs

6

Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS It is an
offence under the Accommodation
Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency
to charge a fee simply for the regis-
tration of your requirements and/or
supplying particulars of premises to
let.

DUDLEY Clean, furnished bedsit
with own bathroom, 587 p.w., for
mature DSS. 07550 002549.

SMART ROOMS in shared house.
Netherton, from £85 p.w. Single,
95 p.w. DG, inc. bill. No DSS.
07970 717139 or 07340 116130.

accommodation wanted

WANTED FLAT / MOBILE HOME
Midlands area to rent. Quiet,
mature lady, genuine reason,
can pay up to £400 per month.
Please call text
07500 300143.

overseas property

HOUSE AND GITE NORMANDY, FRANCE
House has two bedrooms and a
ensuite and a large living room
with open plan dining and
kitchen area. Gite has open plan
living room / kitchen and
upstairs is a bedroom.
£130,000.
0033 233691776.
For more info e-mail steve
-caroli@hotmail.co.uk.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek
independent legal advice before
entering into any financial commit-
ments.

HOUSE AND GITE NORMANDY, FRANCE
House has two bedrooms and a
ensuite and a large living room
with open plan dining and
kitchen area. Gite has open plan
living room / kitchen and
upstairs is a bedroom.
£130,000.
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£130,000.
0033 233691776.
For more info e-mail steve
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HOUSE AND GITE NORMANDY, FRANCE
House has two bedrooms and a
ensuite and a large living room
with open plan dining and

properties wanted

EVERY TIME

WE PAY 100% of purchase price



We buy any house

- FAMILY BUSINESS
- FAST FRIENDLY SERVICE
- COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
- NO FEES/FREE SOLICITORS

WE ALSO BUY LAND

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Need to sell your home fast?

We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit...
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Purchase Agreed Within **7 DAYS**

ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED.
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
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for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?

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Home Cash Buyer

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish

£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££

Houses / Land Required

Ring Paul 24/7 Local **07870 341 089**

Sandwell area: Call **0121 696 4154**

Walsall & Cannock area: Call **01922 432049**

Wolverhampton: Call **01902 489901**

www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

houses for sale

PRIVATE SALE

THREE BED SEMI

Large rear garden.

Room for extension.

Freehold.

No upward chain.

Situated St Peters Road, Netherton.

Offers based on **£135,000.**

All inquiries phone

0121 556 8774.

employment wanted

EXPERIENCED BRICKLAYER seeks work, private and commercial, all types of brickwork. 07534 767256.

8

Motoring

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

CHEVROLET TACUMA 2006, 1.6 SX, blue, 51,000 miles, MoT June 2017, £995, 01902 566552 or 07932 34705.

FORD FIESTA 1.2 2001, MoT, FSH, 60k, red, alloys, excellent condition £450, 07514 711600.

FORD KA 2002, 51,000 miles, black, MoT Jan 2017, good condition for year, £500 ono, 07968 609118 / 01902 786216.

FORD KA 2005, 50,000 miles, 1.3, Silver, long MoT, CD, Some scratches on bodywork, engine fine, 3dr £450 0751464768.

FORD STREET KA Luxury 1.6, 2004, silver, Long MoT, new parts, good condition, £900 ono, 01384 258713.

courses

TELFORD: 3-4 SEPTEMBER
STOKE-ON-TRENT: 17-18 SEPTEMBER

Accredited **ocn** **Geospace Training**

Learn how to take blood TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST

NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - leading UK qualification
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

More info, or to book: **www.geospace.com**

Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD - Research - Overseas



PEUGEOT 207CC CONVERTIBLE

2008, lovely condition, fsh, MoT August 12, 2017, 47k, electric windows, electric roof, rear park assist, CD, a/c, climate control, auto lights.

£3,200 ono.

Telephone 07958 400177.

SEAT IBIZA 1.4 Diesel, 58k, 2010, Good condition. 0 Road Tax. 8 months MoT. 1 lady driver from new. 60-70 mpg. Red. £3,950. 01902 895145.

SUZUKI GRANDE VITARA

2.0
2004, 4dr, petrol, silver, alloys, long MoT, 2 or 4wd, some history, great car, any inspection. **£1,995 ono**
07887 765905 / 01922 473092.



TOYOTA AYGO

2008, 12,700 miles only, silver, suede/leather seats, alloys, remote central Locking, a/c, MoT till March 2017.
£2,850 ono
01902 343435

VAUXHALL CORSA LIFE 1.0, 07 reg, red, 60k very low mileage, fantastic 1st car, had regular service. £2,500 ono. 07982 829876.

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

FORD TRANSIT 57 Reg., T430, alloy drop side pick-up, 13ft body, 12 months MoT, very good condition. £4,250 ono. 07836 568903.

MITSUBISHI CANTANA 7/5 Tonne, 07, 200,000 k, very clean and tidy, flat bed. Tyres good, ready to work. MoT April 17, £4,250 + Vat. 07850 733370 or 07710 343433.

VAUXHALL COMBO van, 1700 diesel, 06 reg, 12 months MoT, 56,000 miles, £2,200.
07828 111032.

driving tuition



10 Hours £99! Five Hours £50!
2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered
ADPDP REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10
01912 488100 / 01686 870059
01384 234954 / 0121 5640090
01902 580065 www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk

motorbikes

LEX MOTO VALIANT 125CC 2015 latest model, only 500km, black and cream, like new, save £400 from list price, £399 ono. 07877 722309.

WORX 125, October 2013, white, only 273 miles, mature owner, as new, immaculate. £1,100 ono.
01384 480354 or 07773 125807.

YAMAHA DT125R reg, 11 months MoT, good for age, various upgrades, mature owner. £1,145 ono. Call after 5pm 07914 903831.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

MCB
TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
Tel: **01902 408176**
1000's of parts available at all times
MONMORE RD. WV1 2TZ

ABC AUTO SALVAGE
WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered
Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Evening 07813 184611
Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

alan reed cars
Used cars wanted for cash
Top prices paid. HP settled.
Buyer could call.
01562 711083 / 07831 245313

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans.
07903 549849, 01902 597035.

9

Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email **marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk**
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
The Borough Council of Sandwell (Cheshire Road, Smethwick) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2016, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Cheshire Road, Smethwick between Watery Lane and Edward Road. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 19/08/16, effective from 15/08/16. Traffic will be diverted via Edward Road, Rosefield Road, Watery Lane and vice-versa. Purpose - service connection by Balfour Beatty for National Grid Gas.
The Borough Council of Sandwell (Portway Road, Oldbury) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2016, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Portway Road, Oldbury between 8pm and 6am from the junction with Wolverhampton Road (A4123) to Shidas Lane. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 06/09/16, effective from 20/08/16. Traffic will be diverted via Wolverhampton Road (A4123), Birchley Island, Churchbridge, Portway Road and vice-versa. Purpose - facilitate works to water main.

10

Personals

personal

GUY, RETIRED
Would like to meet slim Lady with a good sense of humour.

Please write to

Box Number P20466,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Under 11's West
(School Year 6 in Sept)
Call Ian 07710 251555.

Under 13's West
(School Year 8 in Sept)
Call Clare on 07751 620876.

WORDSLEY WASPS EAST
UNDER 9'S

Require Players to help strengthen their team for the start of the new Season.

Playing in the SDYFL League.
Please contact Matt:
07969 543834.

Box Number C20463,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

MR MAGIC
Wonderful wonderful news, love you forever
Mrs Magic.
X X X

CRESWELL WANDERERS FC
Community Charter Standard.
Require players for 2016/17 season.
U9's Jake 07904 387322.
U9's Alistair Pardeep 07967 383814.
U10's Mick 07718 082070.
U12's Gary 07704 239902.
U13's Dave 07591 605932.
U14's Centre Half Neil 07776 435946.
Academy 4-5 years, Ron 07717 677627.

general

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WE NAILED IT!

Classified Advertising Works!

To advertise your business call **01902 319 191**

An attractive proposition

By John Griffiths

You may have heard motorcyclists wishing aloud that they had a stable of bikes: or at least one for the daily commute and another for open road thrills at the weekend.

But to most that's a dream: in the real world what most of us want is a machine we can afford that adapts itself to all roles.

There can be few cheaper, more competent all-rounders than Suzuki's new SV650, a middleweight twin with zesty performance and excellent handling which at £5,736 is definitely at the less expensive end of category A bikes.

The name, and the 645cc V-twin, has been around for nearly 20 years but the 2016 bike comes with some major improvements – no less than 60 engine upgrades and 70 changes to the chassis, according to Suzuki.

The secret of the SV's success has always been its relatively light weight (under 200kgs), low seat and user-friendly nature which makes it accessible for all types of rider, particularly those looking for a first big bike. It also has a particularly slim profile compared to the more common four cylinder machine, making it as easy to thread your way through city traffic as a 50cc scooter. Yet on the open road its a quick, fine handling machine that makes it a pleasure to thread along twisty B-roads.

Many of the upgrades in the new SV are calculated to build on its innate all-rounder characteristics.

It has a little more power – 75bhp and

64Nm of torque – as well as Suzuki's Low RPM Assist, a bit of electronic wizardry designed to make it easier to pull away smoothly (and reduce the risk of a stall) as well as easier, smoother running in stop/start city traffic.

When you consider those engine power figures, you also have to factor in weight, and the new bike is even lighter, by 8kgs, which contributes to its performance and potential fuel economy of up to 73mpg. A fuel tank with a capacity of three gallons gives a competitive range.

The V-twin has a distinctive, and rather pleasing, soundtrack and riding characteristics are a bit special, too, particularly the effective engine braking which helps you to set up perfectly for the next corner. The six-speed gearbox is typically Suzuki slick.

The bike's low weight and seat height make it feel particularly nimble, inspiring confidence and putting a smile on your face as you flick left and right through the bends.

The electronic instrument panel includes a nicely clear digital speed readout, rev counter, gear indicator and comprehensive trip computer. The backlighting is adjustable to help visibility in all light conditions.

Unlike some of its predecessors which came with a bikini fairing the new SV is a naked bike, reflecting the trend in middleweight bikes, but there are a range of accessories and, of course, after market options if you feel you need a screen to deflect the wind.

I confess aerodynamics are something of a black art to me, but I actually didn't register significant wind pressure on this bike at 70mph, whereas on others you can feel as if your arms are being pulled out if their sockets at the same speed. A screen might be useful for long motorway rides, perhaps. The



.....

It is a handy, easy to ride machine for day to day urban journeys with the power and agility to thrill on the open road

.....

mirrors are set wide enough to actually be of use, even for a rather wide rider like me.

The brakes (twin discs at the front, single at the rear) are smooth and effective, and the bike is equipped with ABS too.

The SV's 17-inch wheels are fitted with 120/70 rubber at the front and 160/60 at the rear.

The 2016 bike looks may not be quite as distinctive as its semi-faired ancestor, but the minimalist, streetfighter styling is the current trend for middleweight bikes, so must be what the customer demands.

The lack of a fairing does, of course, have advantages when it comes to price and running/repair costs,

What Suzuki's engineers and designers have done with the new SV is to build on its core strengths, to make it even better in or out of town to create a consummate all-purpose machine. It is a handy, easy to ride machine for day to day urban journeys with the power and agility to thrill on the open road.

Combined with its low price that makes it an attractive proposition.

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SUV has style and poise

By James Fosdyke

Mercedes' answer to the BMW X4 is finally here – the Mercedes-Benz GLC Coupe – so we grabbed the keys to find out what's what.

This is Mercedes' newest addition to its SUV line-up, and its second attempt at a coupe SUV. Sitting below the GLE Coupe in the range, the GLC Coupe is essentially a GLC with a sleeker, sportier body atop the SUV chassis.

But to dismiss this as a GLC for the fashion-conscious is to undersell this car somewhat, because the Coupe is also bestowed with more direct steering and a sportier suspension set-up that aims, in Mercedes' words, to make this "the sports car among the mid-size SUVs".

Under the bonnet you'll find one of Mercedes' now-ageing 2.1-litre diesel engines, but these will eventually be joined by a 3.0-litre V6 diesel, a twin-turbo V6 petrol and a plug-in hybrid. Sadly, though, the latter won't be with us until 2018.

For all Mercedes' claims of dynamism, it's difficult to get around the wanton stylishness of the GLC Coupe. The standard C-Class Coupe is a gorgeous machine, and there's more than a hint of that sleek aesthetic about the GLC.

Somewhat, though, it doesn't sit all that well on the raised GLC chassis.

It's a muscular image, but there's a little too much metalwork on the sides and the bumpers are a mite too deep to call it truly beautiful.

Yet as soon as you sit inside it, you know you're in something a little bit more spe-

cial than your common or garden SUV. The cabin is stock C-Class, but there's nothing wrong with that.

Even though the materials and build quality aren't up to the standards set by Audi and BMW, there's a sense of style and occasion that little else in this price range can match.

The cost of all the GLC Coupe's stylishness, though, is practicality. There's plenty of room in the front, and access to the rear seats is good thanks to the sensibly sized back doors, but taller rear-seat passengers will find that headroom is at a premium.

Fortunately, the boot is capacious enough for items such as suitcases and golf clubs, but the boot floor seems to be quite a way up and hoisting heavier objects in and out may be a bit of a faff.

The GLC Coupe's key strength lies on the tarmac. Sports suspension, which is optional on the normal GLC, comes as standard on the Coupe, while the track has been widened and the coupe body has lowered the centre of gravity.

As a result, the GLC Coupe's road manners are very solid, especially considering the kerb weight of 1.8 tonnes. It isn't what you'd call sporty, and it probably couldn't even keep pace with the Porsche Macan, but it's a match for the likes of the BMW X4 and Range Rover Evoque.

It isn't just the handling that impresses, either. Even with its sporting pretensions, the GLC Coupe offers a smooth, comfortable ride, and despite the ageing engines, it's still quite refined. That's helped by the excellent nine-speed automatic gearbox, though, which does a great job of keeping the revs down and shifts seamlessly between ratios.

Prices start from £40,580, which buys you



As soon as you sit inside it, you know it's something a little bit more special

the 220d Sport model. That's £3,000 more expensive than the equivalent GLC SUV, but there isn't a lot of extra kit. In fact, apart from the suspension, steering and the bodywork, it's absolutely identical to the SUV.

Even so, there's plenty of standard equipment. The nine-speed automatic transmission is standard, along with 18-inch alloys, parking sensors and satellite navigation.

Upgrading to the £42,090 AMG Line, though, will earn you full Artico man-made leather, black headlining and myri-

ad aesthetic tweaks both inside and out. At present, the price structure is relatively flat thanks to the limited engine range, but once the V6 diesel-powered 350d arrives at the end of the year the prices will likely reach up towards the £50,000 mark.

The GLC Coupe is aimed squarely at stylish young professionals who want

to join the SUV revolution without sacrificing the looks and handling of a coupe. It's a pleasant surprise to find that it's relatively practical, though, so some young families may be tempted.



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CHANGE UP A GEAR WITH **DRIVETIME...**

Express & Star



Molly Wright, aged 11, and Sophie Edwards, 12, both of Burntwood



Morgan Daley, aged nine, from St Stephen's Primary



Leah Everitt, aged nine, of Bilston, takes part in the Tri-Golf regional final



St Stephen's Primary's Alecia James and Endrit Tora, both aged nine

Success for 3 Hammers is par for the course

THE 3 HAMMERS Golf Complex academy director Rob Bluck is in high spirits after two successful events at the course.

The second national Street Golf Championship and the Wolverhampton Tri-Golf final were both held at the par-three venue on Old Stafford Road, Coven, with youngsters of all abilities getting involved.

First to take place was the Street Golf, with teams from community golf programmes across 16 Premier League and Championship football clubs, including Villa and Stoke, bearing their teams' strips and competing for the crown.

The competition was organised by the Golf Foundation, in partnership with Premier League 4 Sport, Sport England and Get into Golf.

Adapted

The final was aimed at junior competitors, with teams of four playing adapted formats of golf such as 'Super Sixes' and 'Flag Golf' in the morning and afternoon.

Cardiff City, who won the inaugural trophy in 2015, were victorious once again and the youngsters who took part were also treated to a trick shot display by Kevin Carpenter on the driving range.

"We held the grand final for the second year running and it was a fantastic event," said Bluck. "Fortunately, the rain managed to hold off throughout the day."

"We were initially supposed to start at 10am but we

SPORTING FEATURE

By Joe Edwards

"A young girl called Georgia Smith, from Oxfordshire, managed to get a hole in one in front of the Sky cameras."

had to put it back for half an hour. But after that it all ran smoothly until we finished at 4pm, and then the rain started pouring down.

"A young girl called Georgia Smith, from Oxfordshire, managed to get a hole in one in front of the Sky cameras, as they were down here as well, so that tuned out really well.

"Kevin Carpenter did a trick shot show, which was awesome and everyone really enjoyed it.

"All in all, it was a massive success."

On the following day, 60 young golfers from schools across the Black Country descended on the 3 Hammers course for the Tri-Golf final.

Involved were six primary schools – St Stephen's, Claregate, St Andrew's, St Michael's, The Royal and Stow Heath – with each having won a qualifying event to get to the final.

From each school there were 10 children – five boys, five girls – aged six-to-nine taking part in a se-

ries of challenges on the complex's 10,000 sq ft artificial practice and putting area. Playing with soft clubs and balls, they competed to win certificates, medals and trophies but before that, were given time to practice with some PGA golf professionals.

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School were the winners and will soon head to the Staffordshire School Games county final.

Bluck was equally as thrilled with how the event went, and said: "We had 60 kids here from all across Wolverhampton."

"It was kids who have given golf a go in their schools so it was nice to have them down here and experience playing on the course."

Weather

"It was St Stephen's who won it, the weather tried its best to ruin it again but it all went well. Tri-Golf festivals are played with a soft club and ball but being as they were down here, we got them on the driving range with a proper club and ball and they enjoyed it."

"We have got a number of kids now who have shown an interest in carrying on with golf and coming along to our sessions down here as well."

The 3 Hammers Golf Complex recently won the Golf Foundation's national Critchley Community Award for getting juniors into the sport.

Bluck believes the Street Golf and the Tri-Golf events were a great way to top off a fantastic few months for 3 Hammers.

"We have just won the award for our work with juniors so these events summed up what we are all about. It was the icing on the cake," he added.



Nine-year-old Sam Roden, from St Andrews Primary, during the Tri-Golf regional final



Jamal McKeown, aged nine, of Bilston, takes a stroke at 3 Hammers for the Tri-Golf tournament



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Morris looks to hammer race rivals

CRADLEY rider Ashley Morris was set to start as one of the favourites for Tuesday's showpiece Golden Hammer individual event at Monmore.

Morris has won every major honour with the Heathens and made an emotional return to the club for the 2016 season.

But on an individual front the Hammer has so far eluded him and it's something he was aiming to put right in front of a bumper crowd at the 20-heat event.

Morris said: "It's come around really quickly, but I'm really looking forward to it because it's always a massive meeting."

"You know you'll get a big crowd which makes it special and there are some top riders involved as well."

"It's going to be a tough one with the riders who are racing, but I've been going well at Monmore this season."

"I know the track well enough, I can't have any excuses and I'll be trying to show everyone what I can do against strong opposition."

"I've always seemed to have a chance but things never seem to go my way on the night. Hopefully this time things can be different and I can go all the way."

He admits a return to the Heathens has worked out well after two seasons away from the club.

"I'm enjoying being back this year," Morris said. "I've always been welcomed really well by everyone at Cradley, so I'm grateful for that and I still enjoy riding here."

"I've had some great seasons at Cradley, and I've come on a lot as a rider since I first started here."

"It's great to think I've been involved in winning trophies with the club and having as much success as we have from where it all started. I'll always enjoy wearing a Heathens race jacket."

Sporting cause an upset in friendly victory over Yeltz

Yeltz 1 Bromsgrove Sporting 2
MIDLAND League Division 1 side Bromsgrove Sporting upset higher league Halesowen with two delightfully crafted goals on Tuesday night.

The Rouslers took a deserved 32nd minute lead when Sean Brain's clever flick set Chris Lloyd free to chip brilliantly over Jake King into the net.

The visitors doubled their lead in the 50th minute as Brain free skipped the goalkeeper's challenge before pausing to net a sublime lob from the left side of the penalty area. Ashley Parsons-Smith reduced the arrears in the 77th minute. **Halesowen 0 Kidderminster Harriers 2**
HALESOWEN'S first home friendly was decided by two first-half goals in favour of the National League North side, through a trialist and a Calum Williams own goal.

Prior to kick-off a minute's silence was observed in memory of long-time supporter Jack Hale, who passed away earlier in the week, aged 90.

The Yeltz host Evostik Division One South Gresley in the final pre-season friendly at The Grove on Saturday, 3pm.

Shukokai club gives karate rivals chop



Club members show off their silverware

DUDLEY Shukokai Karate Club sensei Mandie Read is elated after a big medal haul on the world stage.

Read, from Kingswinford, has been a teacher in the martial art for 30 years and took a 30-strong squad to the WUKF World Karate Championships in Dublin.

Representing the All Styles Karate Alliance GB, which Read helped set up 12 months ago, it was made up of competitors from Dudley Shukokai, based at Thorns Community College in Brierley Hill, Nine Locks Shukokai, also in the town, and four other clubs around the country. Dudley Shu-

By Joe Edwards

kokai came away with 11 medals – three gold, four silver and three bronze.

"I couldn't have asked for any better from the squad, especially considering the majority of them are under 18," she said. Read and her son Daniel, 27, and also an instructor, were both among the medals.

Overall, the alliance finished 17th on the medal table out of 71 federations at the competition in Ireland. For more information or to get involved, visit www.dudleyshukokai.co.uk

DELIGHT OVER CRUSHING WIN

HALESOWEN stand-in skipper Wes Griffiths was delighted to see them get their season back on track with a thumping win over Stourbridge last Saturday.

A magnificent knock from opener Will Barratt (127) saw them rack up 336-7 before dismissing their opponents for 184.

It was a perfect response from Griffiths' side following their crushing defeat against Harborne and moves them up to fourth in the Birmingham and District League Division Two. He is now hoping to carry their momentum into a crucial run of fixtures, starting as they host C&R Hawks at Seth Somers Park on Saturday (12pm).

"It was a great performance," said Griffiths. "We'd been poor for a few weeks so we needed to change things up a bit and the extra positivity really paid off."

"Will Barrett (127) was exceptional and got us off to a great start with the bat, and that allowed the rest of the side to play with some freedom."

"Getting so many on the board allowed us to attack with the ball and Dylan Ross-Watt (2-33) bowled with pace and aggression to put Stourbridge on the back foot."

"We chipped in with wickets throughout the innings, Masharraf Shazad (3-63) bowled brilliantly to back up his fireworks with the bat (42*) at the end of our innings and Will Barrett (3-14) completed a great day by getting the last couple of wickets to get us all 24 points."

"We have some big games coming up so hopefully this will give us some momentum."

The Second XI endured another tough day as they suffered a 96-run defeat at Himley.

Adam Hawker (4-36) and Carl Bust (2-50) helped dismiss the home side for 186, but Halesowen saw their dismal batting form continue as they were bowled out for just 90 in reply.

They are now rock bottom of the table ahead of their trip to Kidderminster on Saturday (12.30).

The Third XI and Fourth XI also suffered disappointment, both being defeated by Stourport. The Third XI, who are at Bromsgrove this Saturday, lost by 128 runs, whilst a defiant 78* from Riaz Khan was not enough to prevent a five-wicket defeat for the Fourth XI.

Back-to-back titles for Jordanne



Halesowen wheelchair tennis player Jordanne Whiley celebrates with her trophy

HALESOWEN ace Jordane Whiley has lifted back-to-back singles titles at the British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships.

She raced into a 3-0 first set lead against Holland's Aniek van Koot as she faced the world number one in the British Open final for the second successive year.

Despite van Koot coming back, Whiley reeled off eight games in a row to wrap up the second singles title of her career, 6-3, 6-0. The title comes 12 months after her first.

Earlier in the week Whiley and fellow Brit Lucy Shuker, the London 2012 bronze medalists, had the toughest of first round draws in the women's doubles and eventually bowed out

to top seeds Jiske Griffioen and van Koot 6-4, 2-6, 6-3. Whiley has been selected to represent Great Britain at this year's Paralympics along with nine other wheelchair tennis players.

Titles

At London 2012, she won her first Paralympic medal, a bronze in the women's doubles with Lucy Shuker.

Since her home Games, Whiley has gone on to notch up seven Grand Slam doubles titles including the 2015 Australian Open and Wimbledon doubles crowns, as well as being the 2015 US Open Singles Champion.

Zaber: Let's get it on with Byfield

MANNY Zaber has revealed he's set his sights on a Black Country derby showdown in the ring with Dudley's Les Byfield.

Old Hill's Zaber is undefeated in seven professional contests, since turning over from unlicensed boxing last year.

Byfield is also undefeated having trodden a similar path and has joined him in the paid ranks at lightweight.

The pair were on a collision course during their time in the unlicensed game, before Zaber injured himself in a car accident.

Now the 21-year-old is eager to rekindle the rivalry, saying: "I want Les Byfield. Wherever I go, people keep asking me about the fight."

"We're both local fighters with similar backgrounds and records and I want to get it on."

"I know Les and respect him as a fighter, but I want to get in the ring and prove that I'm the better man."

"We were due to fight a few years ago when we both boxed unlicensed, but I broke my leg in a car accident and it just never happened."

"We are at similar stages in our pro career now, though, and it's a great idea for us both."

Zaber recorded a seventh straight win in Tewksbury, outpointing Gloucester journeyman Andy Harris. 'Pac Man' is set to fight again in September, as he looks to keep himself busy and ready for a possible showdown with Byfield.

Zaber said: "It was a good work out against Andy. He's an experienced pro and knows all the tricks in the book."

"I was pleased to get the rounds in."

"I'm back in the gym and should be fighting early September in Walsall. After that, I plan to keep busy so my message to Les is 'I'm ready when you are'."

Bird wings in with Forest opportunity

YOUNG goalkeeper Brandon Bird has signed for Nottingham Forest for the new Junior Premier League season.

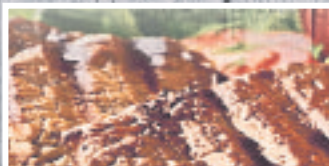
The 10-year-old Dudley shot-stopper has played for West Bromwich United in the Walsall League for over a year, and has also spent time with the Albion and Kidderminster Harriers academies.

Brandon, who turns 11 in January, trains six days-a-week and regularly posts videos of himself doing drills on his Facebook page.

He won three awards at West Bromwich United last season – Most Improved, Most Man of the Matches and Coaches' Player of the Season.

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